

Exposing Biases of Omission:
An Explication of Institutionalized Heterosexism in Public Education

by

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ABSTRACT

EXPOSING BIASES OF OMISSION: AN EXPLICATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED HETEROSEXISM IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

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This research examines how heterosexism is institutionalized in the public education system in British Columbia. I assess the ways in which heterosexism is ever-present in hidden curriculum by exposing epistemologies that support heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity. My primary research draws upon the English Literature 12 curriculum. I examine the themes presented in provincial exam questions and score guides, as well as assess the Integrated Resource Package for content related to heterosexist assumptions. Since students are expected to consider the socio-political contexts of materials studied, I propose it is an important place to challenge compulsory heterosexuality. As efforts to promote social inclusion in schools focus on appending 'women,' 'queerness,' or 'race' onto existing course material, my study challenges the heterosexual imperative that constitutes the foundation of this material. It brings implicit discrimination into clear view, contributing to an expanding field of feminist literature on institutionalized sexual hegemonies.

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Chapter One: *Introduction: Biases of Omission*

The category of sex is the political category that founds society as heterosexual.

—Monique Wittig

Sexuality and the politics of nation are intimately tied (Lazure, 1970; Ross, 2000).

Whether through institutionalized discourses or consciousness-raising social movements, nation building has included moral regulation that aims to create a “normal” heterosexual nation centering on the nuclear family. Not only is heterosexuality normalized and preferred by our liberal economic worldview, but ‘homosexuality’ has been constructed by some as a threatening force that carries the potential to undermine the strength of the nation (Adams, 1997). Through regulatory discursive practices in both public and private life, heteronormativity, that is, the social order that privileges heterosexuality and perpetuates the oppression of non-heterosexual people,¹ is continually reinforced.

In contemporary literature, privileging heterosexual individuals and relationships is referred to as heterosexism. We need not search far for examples of heterosexism, as heterosexist assumptions and practices inundate our culture, from mainstream media representations to formal family and child policies.² Societal heterosexism is easily perceptible, but pinpointing the ways in which heterosexism is perpetuated becomes difficult, and developing strategies to

¹ Kitzinger (2005) explores the prevalence of heterosexism and heteronormativity in her work on reproducing the nuclear family in after-hours medical calls. Her work, “Heteronormativity in Action,” shows how heteronormativity as a social order is reproduced at the level of mundane social interaction in ways that are difficult to decipher because they often exist apart from orientations to “trouble(d)” interactions.

² See Bella and Yetman’s (2000) work on how to make health and social security policies non-heterosexist.

challenge this covert form of oppression is more complicated still. Heterosexism often occurs discursively: it does not usually appear concretely, nor are its effects immediate. Because of this, heterosexist practices can go unrecognized or can be seen as occurring naturally, and are, therefore, susceptible to being overlooked or neutralized.

Since heterosexism leaks from intersecting cultural discourses, attempts to substantiate heterosexism should observe how these discourses are produced and maintained, and by whom. This research project is built upon the presumption that critically analyzing discourses circulated by, and through, major public institutions is necessary for challenging heterosexism. Since formative public institutions are important sites for shaping and reflecting societal beliefs, evidence for the pervasion of heterosexism can be found here. And, because of their cultural influence, strategies to combat heterosexism must include these institutions as integral points of departure.

This project considers the role of public education, a formative Canadian institution, in producing and maintaining heterosexism. Taking the English Literature 12 curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education in British Columbia as a specific example, I aim to contribute to subversive strategies against heterosexism by analyzing discourses circulating through curriculum documents and provincial examination questions and score guides. As the issue of heterosexism is complex and often intangible, I look to these documents for concrete evidence. Seeing these texts as physical symbols of institutional aims and ideals is a longstanding belief among education theorists. According to this view, “one gets closer to what is intended for schools by examining what is to be studied by students” (Goodlad, Klein & Tye, 1979: 61 in Hutchinson, Munby, Chin, Edwards, Steiner-Bell, Chapman, Ho & Mills de Espana, 2001: 108). This may seem obvious, but it has the potential to examine not only what is intended for students

but also what is unintended or undesired. Reflecting on what is intended for students by considering what is omitted is commonly referred to as revealing hidden curriculum.³ Consistent with the aim to expose ideological systems present in text, I examine the entire curriculum package, which includes prescribed content as well as stated course aims. In examining the documents, I ask: is heterosexism maintained by contemporary public education? If so, how?

What we will see is that the discourses intersecting in the English Literature 12 curriculum package contradict each other. This is a common critique of curriculum aims by education theorists,⁴ and is often related to how evaluation techniques do not reflect learning aims. This project, while it includes an analysis of how the evaluation procedures correspond to prescribed learning outcomes, focuses on the way in which material is interrogated with regard to heterosexist assumptions specifically. In other words, my aim is not to critique the standardized provincial examination as an evaluation technique, but to investigate the content of the examination, and its role in maintaining heterosexism.

Chapter 2 of this project provides a working definition of heterosexism, and reviews its status and origins in Canadian culture. It introduces how theoretical concepts of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity are used to get at heterosexist assumptions that are not immediately recognizable. Chapter 2 also sets the stage for challenging institutionalized oppression – an idea that is probed with more depth in Chapters 3 and 4.

To approach a firm grasp of the power enacted by and through curriculum documents, I merge two conceptual paths: institutional oppression and the imagined nation. The first part of

³ Hidden curriculum refers to what is not included in (or intentionally excluded from) curriculum content. It implies the ideal-based nature of formally sanctioned curriculum content. In other words, the ideological system affecting curriculum guides, policies, regulations and textbooks is explicated through hidden content.

⁴ See Wotherspoon (2002).

Chapter 3 describes what is meant by the Canadian national imaginary. It examines the exclusionary tactics performed by the state for the design and maintenance of what Sunera Thobani (2007) terms the ‘exalted subject’. This section considers literature on myths of nationhood; specifically, I document how the cultural production of the Canadian national imaginary produces and maintains a hierarchical organization of subjects based on their conformity to the ideal citizen (as performed within the nuclear family). The latter part of the chapter discusses Foucault’s concept of discipline. Here I consider how disciplinary power is institutionalized in schools – in particular, the way in which the examination serves to rank students according to their compliance with institutional norms. From these two paths, I detail my approach using multidimensionality theory and literature on antiessentialism and antisubordination.

Chapter 4 outlines theories that pertain specifically to the education system, and the Canadian public system in particular. These frameworks are more applied, and provide more tangible ties from ideas of nationhood and discipline to the context of school curriculum. Chapter 5 contains the methods of this research. I ask how heterosexism is maintained by contemporary institutionalized education in Canada and explain the process of discourse analysis used to respond to this question. The data sources (curriculum documents, provincial examination questions and score guides) are described in more detail here. I also outline the structure of the Ministry of Education in British Columbia with regard to curriculum design and anti-discrimination policy. Chapter 6 details the analysis, including description of the research process and findings, and Chapter 7 is dedicated to concluding the topic, acknowledging limitations, and suggesting future directions.

Chapter Two: *Institutionalized Heterosexism in Canada*

Heterosexism is the belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving and thereby its right to dominance.

—Audre Lorde

Status and Origins

Put simply, heterosexism is the presumption that female–male sex is superior to other forms of sexuality and is normal and natural (Temple, 2005).⁵ A more comprehensive conceptualization defines heterosexism as an “ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any nonheterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship, or community” (Herek, 1990). As an ideological system, heterosexism is a cultural construct that manifests itself in institutions and rituals. As a result, its conceptual boundaries expand beyond those of homophobia, which pertain only to the psychological constructs of the individual. In other words, while homophobia is an aversion that exists at the individual level, heterosexism is the extrapolation of this psychological construct to the social or cultural level. Heterosexism, as Herek (1990) asserts, includes both cultural and individual constructs: “psychological heterosexism is the individual manifestation of cultural heterosexism” (Herek, 1996 in Cabaj & Stein, 1996: 102). Since heterosexist attitudes are both ubiquitous and individualized, they pervade dominant culture through invisibility and attack (Herek, 1990).

⁵ I speak in terms of *heterosexism* rather than *homophobia* because the belief that heterosexuality is normal and preferred over homosexuality and other forms of sexuality can be manifested in the ideologies of people who would not be considered homophobic. Also, the term *heterosexism* allows theorizing beyond the binary of ‘heterosexual’ and ‘homosexual’ orientations, which resists reducing sexuality to a category that has been created within a patriarchal or male-centered heterosexual imperative.

The maintenance of heterosexist hegemony involves a wide range of players who, knowing or unknowingly, act in ways that constrain ‘subversive’ sexual alternatives (Gamson, 1990). This is not surprising, especially since in mainstream Canadian society, sexuality is often treated as a dirty word in the public or cultural realm. This is not to deny the fact that same-sex encounters are acknowledged or given value in some cultures. In the context of mainstream Canadian and American culture, though, sexuality tends to be closely identified with the private sphere, which contains the female and homosexuality.⁶ Men and heterosexuality, which, by nature of their dominance require no explanation, are welcome in the public sphere (Padgug, 1989 in Peiss, Simmons & Padgug, 1989). And, as a result of a collection of explicit legislation and institutionalized norms, public expression of ‘homosexuality’ has perpetually been suppressed and its existence denied. While the last three decades of queer consciousness have been historically unprecedented (Warner, 2002), lesbian and gay liberation in Canada throughout the 20th century has been, and continues to be for some, a profound struggle. Confounding this struggle is the political and social complacency surrounding the dual myth that women have equal rights to men and that queer folk have freedom of expression. Taken together, there remains a dangerous myth of public consciousness with regard to queer liberation and contemporary heterosexist practices (Warner, 2002).

To conceptualize heterosexism for analysis purposes, it is useful to rely on theories of

⁶ *Homosexuality* connotes the biological act of two beings of the same sex engaging in sexual activity. Historically, this term has not been questioned, but I avoid it for two main reasons: (1) because its biological roots problematize the notion of a queer identity; and (2) because it is assumed to exist in binary opposition to ‘heterosexuality’, connoting a Western ontological categorical construction of a mode of identity which I consider not to be captured by polarized categories. Since a queer ‘identity’ was arguably not fully recognizable until the beginning of lesbian and gay liberation in the 1960s, I will use the term ‘homosexual(ity)’ where it has been used in a historical context to refer to individuals who engage in any sexual or gender alternatives to heterosexuality. This is the reason for my putting the term in scare quotes.

hegemonic masculinity. As Connell (1995) asserts with regard to masculinity, there exists a consistent, hegemonic image of maleness, despite its variations. The hegemonic male is “a man in power, a man with power, a man of power. We equate manhood with being strong, successful, capable, reliable, in control” (Kimmel, 1994 in Nunn, 2005: 1). In the school/student context, performing maleness involves toughness, emotional control, academic and financial success, muscular appearance, rejection of ‘feminine’ behaviours, and normative heterosexism (Nunn, 2005). In this manner, Canadian institutions serve as instruments that reinforce hegemonic masculinity. Since schools are the sites where young men navigate social relationships and spend the majority of their time, this is where the socialization of masculinity is staged (Kimmel & Mahler, 2003). The school maintains hegemonic masculinity, for example, through textbooks, legitimization of sports, and hierarchical student–teacher relationships (Nunn, 2005). And the real danger of this established hierarchy of masculine traits lies in the subtlety with which hegemonic ideals are reinforced institutionally. As Nunn (2005: 2) puts it, these ideals “do not emerge somewhere in adulthood for men to confront.” Rather, since both patriarchy and masculinity remain unnamed across facets of school life, the institution that privileges masculinity is seen as merely maintaining the natural social order.

Jeffery Kuzmic’s (2000) work on hegemonic masculinity in school textbooks has further developed this theme. By observing several history texts, he finds that while the terms *masculinity* and *men* do not appear in texts or their indices, *women* appears in the index of each text, directing the reader to women’s specific historical contributions. Women are thus positioned as external to the dominant historical narrative, reinforcing the accounts of men as comprehensive. While there is a lively debate among feminist theorists about the necessity of including ‘women’ as a conceptual category for analytic purposes, Kuzmic’s work shows how

including ‘women’ as a category without consideration of ‘men’ specifically creates the masculine experience as the standard against which experiences of women are measured.

The actualization of heterosexism, then, moves beyond privileging heterosexual unions over queer ones to include both sexism and sexual stereotyping. Kuzmic’s (2000) work also speaks to this theme; his examination of social studies textbooks dissects the ways in which men are represented as heroic historical figures. To take a simple example from Kuzmic’s work, Christopher Columbus is represented in textbooks as the courageous and determined hero who nobly contributed to the world’s civilizing mission. The “brutality [and] his legacy of genocide, cruelty and slavery” (Kuzmic, 2000: 117) that characterized the colonizing mission are omitted from the historical narrative. Of course this exaltation of heroic manliness profoundly shapes students’ gendered assumptions (Nunn, 2005).

As we have seen, heteronormativity is a component of hegemonic masculinity. Taking the themes of institutionalized hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity together, heterosexist institutions both socialize individuals to avoid falling outside of normative gender roles and sanctify heterosexual marriage (Warner, 2002). In this research, I argue that heterosexism entails more than the mere preference of male–female relationships over all others. It also involves privileging the heterosexual male body over the heterosexual female one. In other words, performing⁷ maleness requires a rejection of the stereotypically feminine, and performing femininity involves an embodiment of the abject male. Additionally, the categories of masculinity and femininity are not only organized as opposites, but they are also rank ordered: femininity acts as both the counterpart to masculinity and its subordinate. As they are less

⁷ I refer to ‘performing’ as behaving according to traits of hegemonic masculinity. To take a simple example from Eder, Evans & Parker’s work, *School Talk* (1995), male athletes are trained to be physically aggressive and develop a mean attitude toward their opponents. Emotions and physical pain are expected to be masked, as they imply highly undesirable effeminate traits.

celebrated than stereotypically masculine traits, stereotypically feminine traits are othered by hegemonic masculinity.

While discussion around ways in which curriculum is “heterosexualized” is becoming more common among Canadian queer theorists,⁸ the majority of new research on epistemology and curriculum studies focuses broadly on anti-oppressive pedagogy and general oppression by curriculum materials, standardized grading techniques and teaching styles. Ministry policies are steps behind even mainstream literature, focusing on making schools safer for all students through anti-bullying programs and equitable teaching strategies.⁹ These initiatives, while demonstrating concrete steps to making school environments less explicitly discriminatory, allow subtler systemic oppression¹⁰ to remain implicit in the public education system. This is not to call these initiatives superficial or unimportant. Rather, I am proposing that fighting only explicit discrimination detracts from the manufacture of dissent against subtler forms of oppression. Heterosexism, as it embodies more than overt queer-bashing, is one of these quiet but pervasive styles of ‘discrimination’ that needs to be challenged at the institutional level.

Recent literature by feminist legal theorist Kerri Froc (2010) supports this argument for challenging institutionalized oppression; she insists upon the need for anti-discriminatory policy to combat multiple modes of systemic oppression in the face of neoliberal ideology. While gender and race theorists use comprehensive intersectional and multidimensional approaches to

⁸ See “Interrupting Heteronormativity: Toward a Queer Curriculum Theory” (1999) by Dennis Sumera and Brent Davis at York University in Toronto.

⁹ See <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/> for Safer Schools program document.

¹⁰ I refer to heterosexism as ‘oppression’ rather than ‘discrimination’ because it implies the structural aspect of the form. Policy language prefers ‘anti-discrimination’ for obvious reasons – for one, it is more specific and concrete – but the term ‘oppression’ more appropriately captures forms of social exclusion that infiltrate the system so entirely.

unpack systemic inclusion and exclusion,¹¹ these have not yet been applied to the heterosexist imperative that is created and maintained through institutionalized education. My exploration of indoctrinated hegemonies uses a multidimensional analysis to challenge the tendency for political responses to queer identity to be viewed through a heterosexist lens.

Combining existing critiques of the Canadian education system with multidimensionality theory, I operate from the perspective that there is a complex problem of oppression along lines of gender, sexual orientation, race, ability and class in the Canadian public education system. Looking at the curriculum content of one province specifically, I reveal how we might begin challenging this problem of heterosexism, as one aspect of systemic oppression, through curriculum revision. I suggest that this problem is broad in scope as it affects all students educated in the Canadian public system: not only does the disenfranchised Other face issues of exclusion and seclusion through erasure of experience, but those who fall within the identity of the ideal student are expected to conform and aspire to the hero figure as it exists in the imagined Canadian nation. This idea of the hero subject in the Canadian imaginary and its implications for institutionalized oppression is expanded upon in the following chapter.

¹¹ See Froc (forthcoming) for a discussion of reconceptualizing intersectional modalities of oppression using multidimensionality theory. Froc argues that isolating ‘-isms’ is problematic, as individuals are located in matrices of oppression and domination wherein one’s social location at a given time situates one as at once oppressor and oppressed.

Chapter Three: *Theoretical Framework: A Critical Feminist Approach*

Critical Feminism

The position from which I approach this topic of heterosexism is informed by critical feminism. As such, the primary aim of this research is to deconstruct power dynamics related to sex and gender identity. Since our knowledge of the historical factors contributing to sex and gender oppression is only partial, because, for the most part, those with power have constructed it, presumed historical facts are viewed through a critical lens. As explored later in this paper, I am not asserting that those in positions of power have exclusively shaped the contemporary Canadian nation. Instead, Canadian national discourses of the ‘multicultural mosaic’ and freedom for all citizens are fraught with misrepresentations. Similar to Razack (1998), I make the critical assertion that what we know about the history of our nation is construed by intersecting systems of capitalism, patriarchy and white supremacy.

This chapter contains a theoretical discussion of discourses of citizenship, discipline and commodified knowledge. I show how merging these topics provides a firm foundation for unpacking the joint issues of sex and gender oppression by the Canadian education system. Following this synthesis, multidimensionality theory is described in relation to how it is employed in the analysis. I explain how modes of identity intersect and overlap in such complex ways that not only is it impossible to completely isolate (hetero)sexuality as a research analytic, but isolating sexuality also makes for a narrow understanding of the way in which identity politics are institutionalized. A review of theories of antistatization and antiessentialism follows this. More balanced research necessarily considers these approaches, though they are often criticized. Because recognizing the nuances of essentialist versus anti-essentialist research

is critical for responsible analyses of group-specific oppression, I briefly outline the debate between critical feminist theorists and critics of ‘postmodern’ approaches and offer my reconciliation of this tension to close the chapter.

Granting Citizenship: The Exalted Subject

Sunera Thobani, in *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada* (2007), examines how the figure of the national subject and the excluded Other operate in the master narrative of the Canadian nation. She argues that the exalted national subject is, through the trope of the citizen, deemed the “legitimate heir to the rights and entitlements proffered by the state,” (3) and, as such, “positively commands respect as the locus of state power” (4). The exalted subject is, through the institution, defined in binary opposition to the outsider. The outsider, “devoid of the qualities and values of the nation,” (4) is the stranger, a ‘figure of concern’ who threatens nationality and progress.

Thobani (2007), following Foucault’s (double) meaning of the word ‘subject,’ explains that the exaltation of ‘good,’ ‘moral,’ and ‘lawful’ characteristics in the idea of Canadian nationhood serves to concretize abstract humanity into governable bodies. Employing a Hegelian dialectic, she explains how these binary characters define nationhood relationally. This definition emerges through narrations of key historical moments and is inscribed into the judicial order through policy and practice. This narrative, she argues, is characterized by a few general identities – exalted subjects (or nationals), others marked for extinction (Indians), and others marked for perpetual estrangement or exploitation (immigrants) – and has remained profoundly intact throughout Canadian history. As these characters are spatially and temporally created and defined, Thobani’s explication of the narrative of exaltation and commandment is purposely

spatial and temporal. It is with this recognition of the historical impact on geographical space that she interrogates the sociocultural realm of the national symbolic.

Thobani's (2007) critique of the formation of Canadian national identity according to binary subject relations supports my conceptualization of the institutionalization of power and subordination in the education system, especially in terms of her vision of what is preferred by the bureaucratic, or capitalist, nation-state. For Thobani (2007), exaltation is a technique of power. Her view fits within Foucault's (1977 as cited in Thobani, 2007:8) framework of "the historical fabrication of subjects," as exaltation "acculturates the national subject into the isomorphic state-nation-subject triad," seducing subjects into reproducing their nationality.

In *Exalted Subjects*, the practices that entice embodiment and actualization of exalted characteristics are firmly institutionalized. According to this perspective, the state, then, has the power to recognize and reflect back the appropriate co-optation of the exalted subject in a way that reinforces the hierarchical arrangement of individual bodies. While the characteristics of exploited or estranged bodies may shift over time (for example, immigrant bodies, depending upon the historical context of their place of origin, may be (de)valued differently according to the role they play in, or for, Canadian society), the characteristics of the exalted and the corresponding Other, as Thobani argues, have remained relatively stable. This view strongly echoes Foucault's (1977) deployment of the knowledge–power nexus in *Discipline and Punish*. The technology utilized in, and by, the institution of the school shapes the parameters of student and teacher learning and knowing. Thobani (2007) builds on this idea using several examples, one of which is how the inauthenticity of Native Canadian identity in the scope of the colonial master narrative is explicit in the oppressive policies that build the Canadian nation.

To discuss the prominent role of education in forming the 'authentic' Canadian citizen, it is useful, once again, to imagine 'the citizen' as a subject of exaltation and 'the stranger' as the Other. The authentic student embodies the values, ethics and mores that characterize nationality in the master narrative of the nation. This national 'subject-as-citizen', as Thobani (2007) names it, is the protagonist of the dominant student narrative. The student-subject is the quintessential hero, a rational and stable figure, who is thereby entitled to the coffers of the state. In an abstract sense, student-citizenship is granted to those who abide by the colonial ideal of Canadian nationhood in the school setting.

In contrast, we can imagine the student-citizen's binary opposite, the excluded Other, as the inauthentic pupil. This stranger is kept from achieving student-citizenship through various sociopolitical systems. In Canada, for example, since citizenship was racialized from its inception (Thobani states that Aboriginal peoples were not granted rights by the same state that governed their lives, and immigration policies classified racialized newcomers as non-preferred, casting any non-Whites as degenerate strangers), the institution of the school performs highly racialized practices of exaltation. Thus, the exaltation of White subjects ritualizes the process of exclusive student-citizenship, as most nationals perform their citizenship as a way to achieve a high ranking in the continually re-emerging racial hierarchy (Thobani, 2007). This is, of course, a simplistic conception of Subject and Other; identities are shifting, as are the sociopolitical contexts in which they are performed. And, as mentioned, both the exaltation of the subject and the exclusion of the Other created and maintained by Canadian institutions are complicated by multiple intersections of identity. For example, a poor, single white man experiences social structures differently than does a wealthy, married racialized immigrant woman.

Taking the ideas of Thobani and Foucault concurrently, I posit that the form and content of the Canadian education system is highly politicized, to both celebrate and delegitimize certain types of knowledge and ways of knowing. Since exaltation “provides both form and content to an attendant structure of humanity, as it were, which becomes available to these subjects and facilitates their experience of ‘belonging’ to a community through the recognition and cultivation of such shared nationality,” (Thobani, 2007: 9), curriculum structure and content is a hotbed for deconstructing institutionalized oppression. To be more specific in terms of modalities of identity for the purpose of this analysis, the system prescribes material, discursively or otherwise, that reflects a strong bias toward heteronormativity.

Since this project shows how roles of the exalted and the Other are systemically enforced through the institution of public education, I draw heavily on Foucault’s (1977) perspective of institutionalized knowledge-power. Foucault (1977) writes that the condemned other, possessing a ‘lack of power,’ is the symmetrical, inverted figure of the king. He argues that power and knowledge imply one another and that power produces knowledge. The following sections provide a more detailed overview of his notion of the school as a site of state and self-discipline.

Discipline

In *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault explicates the discipline of subjects by exploring the training of bodies. He claims that discipline is a specific technique of power that makes individuals both objects and instruments of its exercise. Disciplinary power, he argues, is successfully derived through the instrumental use of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and the examination procedure.

Foucault writes that the institution of the school reflects the “spatial nesting of hierarchized surveillance” (171) that mechanizes the training of subjects. The school as an

observatory makes possible the transformation of pupils through coercion, or the detailed discipline of conduct through constant gaze. This site of instrumentation allows the gradual and constant objectification and exploitation of individuals. As a disciplinary institution, the school “secrete[s] a machinery of control that function[s] like a microscope of conduct” (173). And conduct itself refers, in this case, to conformity to the ‘normal’; students are punished for ‘non-observance’ to rules, i.e. truancy, impoliteness, indecency. Normalcy is central to the institution and those who deviate from the domain of the normal are punishable (Foucault, 1977).

Individuation

But “reducing gaps” between subjects, as Foucault (1977) refers to the function of disciplinary punishment, does not imply collaboration. In fact, the disciplinary enforcement of conformity to the normal opposes regimes of collectivity. Foucault (1977) explains that the school disciplines by stratifying subjects as individuals and measuring these subjects according to their conformity to the rule. In other words, measuring against a set of regulations serves to separate students from each other, while still disciplining subjects toward the normal. This practice is apparent in the rank ordering of subjects according to performance and the valorizing of the “good” student. The process of exam taking, for example, disciplines by documenting the performance of subjects, thus individuating them.

The Examination Process

The examination, a material culmination of the hierarchical observation and normalizing judgment of discipline, “manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected” (184–5). It is the highly ritualized procedure whereby “the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth” (185) converge to instrumentalize discipline. The examination process,

one of evaluation and stratification, is the visible culmination of power and knowledge. As Foucault asserts, “in this slender technique are to be found a whole domain of knowledge, a whole type of power” (185). In that it ritualizes the stratification of subjects, the examination maintains a science of pedagogy in the school institution, assuring a movement of knowledge between teacher and student.

In terms of how the examination relates to hierarchical observation, it concretizes visibility into the exercise of power. As mentioned earlier, hierarchical observation, one of Foucault’s core elements of discipline, operates within the process of examination. Insofar as the examination dually extracts and constitutes knowledge, it is the site where subjects are most objectified. While disciplinary power infiltrates subjects through multiple, invisible means, the examination, in its materiality, imposes visibility on its subjects.

Content as Discipline

Foucault’s theorizing supports my argument that the knowledge learned through curricula is prescribed by a powerful institution and that subject relations are articulated methodically, through knowledge that is embedded in school culture. Clearly, then, knowledge valued by the subjected, ‘condemned’ other will not be culturally valued unless it becomes integral to the institution. Foucault’s (1977) work on the modalities of knowledge as effects of institutional power informs my analysis of the existing curriculum structure. The structure must be redesigned to include equity studies at its core for knowledge of the condemned to achieve subject status.

Foucault constitutes ‘discipline’ as a type of power that can be exercised by institutions. In his discussion of surveillance, he invokes Bentham’s *Panopticon*: an observatory tower surrounded by an annular building divided into prison cells. The structure is arranged so that one can stand at top of the central tower and supervise all subjects simultaneously.

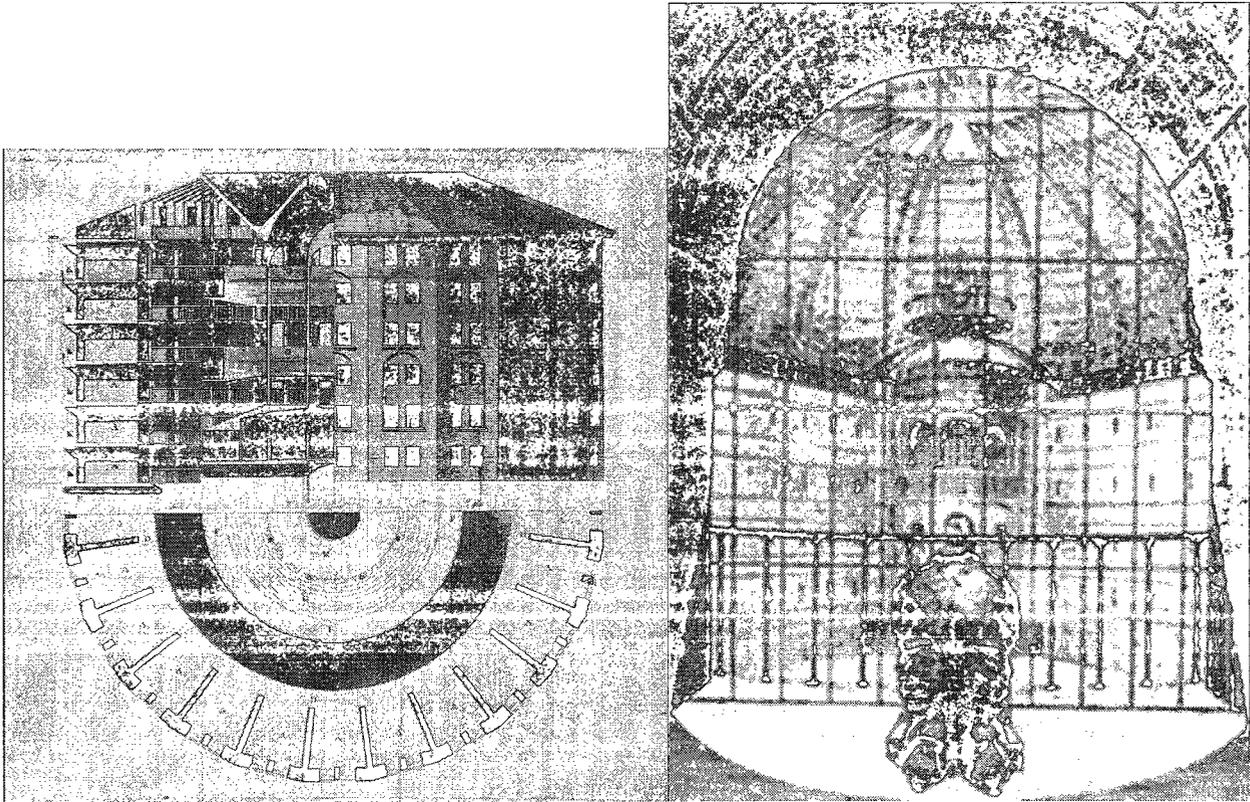


Figure 1: Architectural design of the Panopticon.¹²

Figure 2: Representation of a prisoner from the inside of a cell in the peripheral building of the Panopticon.¹³

The major effect of the Panopticon, as Foucault explains, is to “induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (201). As a mechanism, the Panopticon automatizes power; as prisoners are unaware of when they are being watched, they observe regulations as though supervision is continuous. Thus, power is no longer enacted by means of surveillance, but employed through self-surveillance.

The Panoptic structure illustrates the amplification of the disciplinary effects of self-surveillance. As individuals feel subjected to a continuous gaze, they subject themselves to

¹² Note. From J. Bentham. Plan of the Panopticon (*The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, ed. Bowring, vol. IV, 1843, 172–3). Cf. p. 201; taken from *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1977: 163)

¹³ Note. From N. Harou-Romain. Plan for a penitentiary, 1840 A Prisoner, in his cell, kneeling at prayer before the central inspection of the tower. Cf. p. 250; taken from *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1977: 164).

docility. As a metaphor, the central tower of the Panopticon is useful for conceptualizing instruments of self-discipline outside of architectural design. Adopting the metaphor of the Panopticon to the conditions of the school examination, for example, demonstrates the invisible power enacted in and by content. The very content present in examinations is a point of contact for the legitimation of certain types of knowledge. It is with this belief that I focus on the examination as a piece of data for my analysis.

The Classroom

My concentration on the visible and invisible disciplining of student-subjects builds upon Razack's (1998) work on discriminatory punishment in courtrooms and classrooms. Razack (1998) argues that relations of domination and subordination in the classroom shape what can be known, thought, and said. She claims that current ways of including cultural diversity in education are superficial and fail to address the intersecting systems of capitalism, patriarchy and white supremacy. In other words, education is an institution that, for the most part, perpetuates the dominant ideologies, norms and values of mainstream society. I continue this argument, suggesting that the confinement of discussion of power relations between dominant and subordinate groups to 'social justice'-themed courses actually reinforces norms of subordination.

Commodified Knowledge

This research is also informed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) treatment of Western knowledge as commodified through systemic processes of colonial exploitation of indigenous peoples. Her edited volume, *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (with Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) shows how critical qualitative inquiry is still largely informed by Western ontology. Her work supports the idea that 'traditional' disciplines are firmly grounded in cultural worldviews that do not allow for the exploration of ideas outside of colonized knowledge. It

frames my critical perspective on how organized systems of knowledge within the education system serve to discipline people and bodies. I employ these ideas to ask how the discipline of knowledge at the curriculum level is both sexed and gendered, preparing, in more or less abstract ways, the heterosexual male subject for knowing and living according to Western values and preparing the (hetero- or asexual) feminized Other for domestic and manual labour. Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) work is consistent with my later argument for the importance of restructuring formal education to include the experience of the excluded across curriculum subjects. Her critique is considered when examining the data for heterosexist assumptions.

Insider-Outsider

Provocative work by Himani Bannerji (2000) is also relevant here, as she boldly asserts that "Canada" is a sexist-racist body. She articulates how racialized immigrants and women are Othered in the imagined community of Canada and she claims that the categorical identities applied to those who do not belong are organized and regulated by institutions of the Canadian machine. Her article called "Geography Lessons" in *The Dark Side of the Nation* (2000), on the making of insiders and outsiders in the Canadian nation, develops the idea of the Canadian nationalist project as constructed through the education system. It contributes to my interrogation of the gendered and sexualized Othering produced by the educational apparatus. Hers is also a valuable perspective for conceptualizing the modern institution as mechanical and operational. As well, this piece informs my consideration of the necessity of centralizing queer and women's standpoints in education, to construct an alternative national imaginary within this liberal democratic state of formal gender equality.

The Gendered-Sexed Body

This research invokes Judith Butler's (1990, 1993) body of literature on gender studies and ontological processes to challenge how the sexed body is entangled in maintaining the social order. As is likely evident in my discussion so far, I make two critical assumptions that directly oppose the post-functionalist ideology that Butler also vehemently refuses: queer identity is not a threat to family or nationhood, and queer identity is not against nature or inauthentic. To the argument that queerness (or 'homosexuality,' as it is commonly termed within the functionalist approach) disrupts the proliferation of the human species, I refute that there is a shared global concern with overpopulation. I see the argument against the 'homosexual act' based on the necessity of heterosexual, procreative sex as a guise for both the moralizing of (hetero)sexuality by the religious Right, among others, and the maintenance of the traditional nuclear family unit for purposes of economic production. As this paper is strongly oriented to the pursuit of social justice, the authenticity and important social contributions of queer identity are treated as given throughout.

Considering Heterosexism within Intersectionality and/to Multidimensionality

Heterosexism is a pervasive social disease which is widely (and silently) accepted throughout family, media, and society. Nearly all of the media (which constantly reflect [mandate] the focuses and desires of society) is exclusively heterosexual. The way our society is constructed and the influence media have in society only work to implement heterosexism (Griffin, 1998: 33).

Compulsory heterosexuality has always been a core component of the exalted Canadian subject (Thobani, 2007). Also embodied by Thobani's exalted, though, are whiteness, hypermasculinity versus hyperfemininity, wealth, ablebodiedness and coloniality.¹⁴ While

¹⁴ Intersectional modes of identity are further complicated by the notion of coloniality. This issue is key to comprehending institutionalized systemic oppression as it nuances White privilege with the historical and specialized contexts of whiteness in Canada.

evidence for preferential treatment of these identities is important to consider in the material examined in this research, a comprehensive examination of these facets of identity is beyond the scope of this study. As argued by Froc (2010), though, it is important to consider not only how modes of identity (e.g. queerness, Aboriginality) intersect as categories, but also how systems of oppression interact. In terms of the latter, Froc (2010) and other feminist theorists have likened the importance of interconnectivity theories of oppression to a birdcage:

If you look very closely at just one wire in the cage, you cannot see the other wires. If your conception of what is before you is determined by this myopic focus, you could look at that one wire, up and down the length of it, and be unable to see why a bird would not just fly around the wire...It is only when you step back, stop looking at the wires one by one, microscopically, and take a macroscopic view of the whole cage, that you can see why the bird does not go anywhere (Frye, 1983: 4-5).

This metaphor illustrates how systems of oppression are interconnected, but imagining systemic oppression in this way without simultaneously considering intersecting modes of identity does not get at the scope of complex and more or less subtle subordination. As Froc (2010) claims, a “post-intersectional” framework is emerging among American scholars that accounts for both of these layers in critical analyses. This new framework has been referred to as “new complexity” theory, “multidimensionality,” “symbiosis,” “cosynthesis,” and “interconnectivity,” though it has not yet received much attention from Canadian scholars (Froc, 2010). For simplicity, I will use the term multidimensionality throughout this project.¹⁵

Working Responsibly in Multiple Dimensions

Oppressions are composed of a vast network of complex, overlapping, interactive and mutually reinforcing systems that constitute *everyone's* reality. The systems have real, material effects that are more devastating and acutely felt by some, but no one is left untouched (Froc, 2010).¹⁶

¹⁵ See Hutchinson (2001) as cited in Froc (2010).

¹⁶ Forthcoming.

Froc, in arguing for a reformed approach to Canadian *Charter* law that better prevents rights' violation in complex cases of claimant oppression,¹⁷ asserts that systems of oppression are most accurately described as an "invisible matrix," like that in the popular film *The Matrix*. This differs from the 'birdcage' model described above, which implies that each wire of oppression is discrete. The birdcage also assumes that since a person can be contained by the cage, some people observe the cage from the outside. As illustrated in the above quote by Froc, multidimensionality theorists acknowledge that every individual is thoroughly enmeshed in interlocking systems of oppression, though they are disproportionately negatively affected.

I make the assumption in this research that intersectional systems and multidimensional modes of discrimination are at work in the Canadian education system. However, I focus on heterosexist practices to draw attention to a problem that I feel is grossly under-examined. Because it is so entrenched, heterosexism often escapes recognition, resulting in hidden biases of omission. In focusing on heterosexism, I am not simply isolating one 'wire' of the 'birdcage,' as heterosexism affects individuals in drastically different ways according to the intricate systems and interacting modes of identity at play. But attempting to consider overlapping layers at a stage when few critical scholars are attempting to conceptualize institutionalized heterosexism would risk watering down or neutralizing this form of oppression. I discuss this decision further in the concluding section of this project.

¹⁷ Rather than speaking of 'discrimination,' which is typically used to discuss legal issues pertaining to the *Charter*, Froc (2010) uses 'oppression,' in Iris Marion Young's (1990) five-pronged sense of the word: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. I adopt her use of 'oppression' as a way of expanding conceptualization of antisubordination beyond discourses of 'equality' and 'discrimination'.

Antisubordination

A major critique of my theoretical approach to explaining systemic oppression is what Razack (1998) calls the problem(s) of the dominant studying the subordinate. If issues of social justice are appended to the existing course offerings, exclusionary content across disciplines will still make up the core of celebrated knowledge. This supports the argument against a mere unmarking of oppression through an extra history lesson – social justice issues will not receive adequate attention if they remain at the periphery of school curricula. This discussion provides a vehicle for my conceptualization of the importance of challenging heterosexism in English Literature curriculum; it supports a cross-curricular centralizing of the subtler issues of systemic oppression.

Contemporary feminist theory is a recent target of critics of postmodernism and poststructuralism.¹⁸ As anti-essentialist empirics become commonplace among feminist scholars, so too does apprehension over the use of gender or sex as an analytical category (Bordo, 1990). New visions on human subjectivity and discourse (e.g., those advanced by Foucault) have paved the way for intersectionality theories and the “restless deconstruction of ‘fixed’ categories such as gender” (Pratt, 2008: 54). As critics of intersectionality and subjectivity (and postmodernism and poststructuralism) assert, though, deconstruction has problems for political organizing because we cannot generalize enough to form a social critique. How can feminist theory remain coherent if it is based on what Butler (1994) terms “contingent foundations?” As critical feminist

¹⁸ I am only distinguishing between postmodernism and poststructuralism to capture critiques of new feminist theory by scholars who oppose tenets of contemporary French philosophy (e.g., those synthesized by Foucault, Derrida and, to some extent, Lacan and Barthes) but do not write on postmodernism specifically. I recognize that critics of both postmodernism and poststructuralism are often critiquing arguments by scholars who would not identify themselves as belonging to either school. Explicating this distinction further is irrelevant to discerning my use of feminist theory.

geographer Geraldine Pratt (2008: 55) refutes, however, gender remains a real category despite deconstructive practices: “our experience does not fragment infinitely but, rather, gets fixed through complex social processes.” She suggests that feminism as a social movement will need to commit some crimes of essentialism to gain political momentum, but should take responsibility for continually reflecting on the constructed nature of gender categories throughout its occupation. Only with some degree of totalizing can feminism avoid an uncritical “celebration of plurality” (Pratt, 2008: 58) that is incapable of generating social change.

This theme is echoed in theoretical work by a number of feminist scholars across disciplinary boundaries, several of whom have taken up the specific issue of how to perform research on the experience of minoritized or oppressed groups without reducing or essentializing. As Ann duCille (1994, as cited in Razack, 1998: 157) writes,

How do we negotiate an intellectually charged space for experience in a way that is not totalizing or essentializing – a space that acknowledges the constructedness of and the differences between our lived experiences while at the same time attending to the inclining, rather than declining, significance of race, class, culture and gender?

The fear that emerges is the problematic tendency to essentialize in order to simplify issues, often for political reasons. These practices restrict our understanding of how individuals act and are acted upon in the development of their social locations. The benefit of resisting this tendency is clear: we come to see how people are socially constituted in different ways due to multiple intersecting forces, some of which have historical and spatial roots.

But I wish to acknowledge for a moment the dangers of anti-essentialism, or what Razack (1998: 159) problematizes as, “to essentialize or not to essentialize?” Razack (1998: 159) suggests practicing anti-essentialism as a methodology by engaging in a “politics of accountability.” She suggests we begin with the recognition that there is no singular group

experience, and move forward with the recognition that we are all implicit in the subordination of others. While providing deep insight into the multiple ways in which each of us, to varying degrees of course, simultaneously straddles privilege and oppression, her discussion falls short in calling for action beyond intense reflexivity. In calling for us all to examine our own subject positions, she asserts that accountability, instead of a politics of inclusion, be used to “ask questions about how we are understanding difference and for what purpose” (1998: 170). While I am excited by this idea, for the purpose of this paper, I will mark it as a danger in terms of its ability to paralyze us all into a state of furious journaling wherein we are unable to propose concrete changes. This paper will take forward issues of anti-essentialism as important for a deep understanding of complex subject positions, but will avoid the tedious tracing of subject narratives when arguing for a diversity of experiences to be represented in curriculum content. I will argue that antsubordination tactics can take form in measures of evaluation and prescribed learning outcomes – regulated teaching strategies that move beyond curriculum content itself.

Chapter Four: *Education as a Formative Institution*

The man [sic] whom education should realise in us is not the man such as nature has made him, but as the society wishes him to be: and it wishes him such as its internal economy calls for ... It is society that draws for us the portrait of the kind of man we should be, and in this portrait all the peculiarities of its organisation come to be reflected. (Durkheim, 1956: 64–65)

Schools are sites of gender training, as much as they are sites of reading or math training. (Nunn, 2005: 1)

These comments, the first made a half-century ago and the second only a half-decade ago, illustrate the formative role of the institution of public education. This section demonstrates how its form and content, as revealed through text, are designed to provide active participants for a well-functioning economy. As such, the aim of the education system is to mold subjects into exalted citizen-subjects.

Knowledge and Attitudes: The School as Formative throughout Canadian History

As explicated by multidimensionality theory, heterosexism in education is not an isolated phenomenon, nor is it confined to contemporary considerations of gender and the institution of education. Historically, the institutionalization of traditional, heterosexual marital sexuality in Canada has taken overt forms. The following section elaborates on how sex and gender roles have been shaped in various ways by the education system. The conclusion that emerges is that acknowledging the relationship between celebrated knowledge and male-centered forms of knowledge-making is key to understanding how heterosexism was (and is) able to prevail in institutionalized education.

In the early 1950s in Canada, under a conservative liberal government, Cold War paranoia shadowed North American life. Parallel to the suppression of internal political dissent

was the more subtle campaign to establish order based on traditional family life wherein patriarchal nuclear family ideals reigned supreme (Girard, 1987). The homosexual [sic] was the prime “admonitory icon” of the 1950s (Girard, 1987, p. 1). Whether it was for stirring feelings of a lack of social control or for representing an unknown worthy of fear, the homosexual served as the evil pirate in the never land of the wholly Christian, patriarchal nuclear family. In fact, ‘the homosexual’ seemed a greater threat to social order than did ‘the communist’ (Girard, 1987).

The rigid ideological positioning of sex and gender roles and the repression of ‘homosexuality’ became explicit in mainstream culture toward the mid-20th century. Functionalist and psychiatric models of analysis dominated thinking about sexuality, outlining the boundaries of sexual normality in prominent medical and social science research (Peiss, Simmons & Padgug, 1989). This insistence on ‘logical’ analysis created a slew of categories into which human behaviour could be essentialized. “The male” and “the female,” along with “the parent” and “the child,” were each assumed to fill important roles in a sustainable social system. The positioning of family roles as critical for the survival and proper functioning of modern society, then, imbricated the “homosexual” and the societal “deviant” even further. These labels were concretized in and through research in developmental psychology at the time, and trickled into the patriarchal master narrative disciplining the organization of Canadian life around the affluent nuclear family. Under this model, whereby the ideal situation was one of utmost functionality, the ‘homosexual’ was not only devalued on the social hierarchy, but also entirely unrecognized as an authentic contributor to the productivity and procreativity of the nation.

While this version of functionalism, spearheaded by Talcott Parsons, dominated North American sociological theory during the 1940s and 50s, the categorical nature of functionalism was not unchallenged. In 1948 and 1953, the American sexologist Alfred Kinsey’s *Kinsey*

Reports rocked North American society. Kinsey (with Pomeroy & Martin, 1948) argued that sexuality cannot simply be divided into hetero- and homosexual; rather, it exists on a continuum of sexual behaviour.¹⁹ His views, while praised by some in his field, were widely attacked publicly for being immoral, perverse and damaging to family values (Reumann, 2005). Kinsey was declared a Communist, a pornographer and a disruptive force in American family life (Reumann, 2005). His reports, while prominently featured in media broadcasts and comedy clubs, were banned from selected audiences out of fear of cultural corruption (Reumann, 2005), and, perhaps predictably, among these audiences were female students: students at Wellesley Women's Liberal Arts College were told they could not buy a copy of the Reports without written permission from a professor.²⁰

The subjugation of women illustrated above is mostly indicative of *gendered* moral regulation, but it has obvious implications for the regulation of sexuality. This system successfully created a 'straight' mind, with which a society other than a patriarchal, heterosexual one could not be legitimately conceptualized. Heterosexuality and male privilege were not only normalized but also formally sanctioned; regulators of institutionalized education (predominantly men), for example, aimed to re-create for women a middle-class Christian atmosphere in their residences. This was even evident in the architecture of the buildings. Annesley Hall at the University of Toronto's Victoria College was built to house a domestic environment, externally and internally (Gidney, 2007). Dormitory standards of conduct were far more stringent for women than for men, especially with regard to curfews and walking on certain parts of campus alone (Gidney, 2007). At the University of Toronto residences circa 1950, men were allowed to

¹⁹ At this time, Kinsey was solely concerned with investigating sexual behaviour. It was not until later (by Foucault in the 1970s and by the queer theorists of the 1990s) that this theory was further complicated by the inclusion of a queer identity.

²⁰ *Time, Inc. March 1, 1948*, retrieved on November 20, 2008.

come and go as they pleased, while women's nighttime activities were restricted under heavy surveillance (Gidney, 2007). And, as Gidney (2007) argues, these regulations were reinforced by the female students themselves, echoing a Foucauldian theoretical framework of institutional self-discipline. While administrators took the lead in subjecting women to a gendered, moralized student culture, student councils shaped and created rules that reinforced the cultural climate and enforced self-regulation among female students (Gidney, 2007).²¹ Student self-policing is still a major focus of contemporary research on the regulation of teenage sexuality.²²

These regulatory practices reveal how women's values and morals were seen as in need of protection and guidance (Gidney, 2007). Female students were expected to interact with members of the opposite sex mainly in such structured settings as socials and dances (Gidney, 2007). These restrictions reveal an assumption of heterosexuality and the blatant disregard of alternative sexualities among female students.

As demonstrated, higher education in Canada has historically been governed according to patriarchal, middle-class and Christian values. Even recently, though, schools have been called one of Canada's "major heterosexist institutions," sanctioning heterosexuality through subtle expectations as well as through overt homophobia (Temple, 2005: 279). Over the past two decades, these sanctions have been receiving more attention as historians attend to the

²¹ See Gidney (2007) for a detailed look at expectations of self-regulation by female students as revealed in student council meeting minute-books in Canadian universities from 1920–1960. She compares the books of male and female residence meetings and shows how women upheld strict guidelines pertaining to dress, care for the domestic environment, visitors and social behaviours (e.g. gambling, drinking), whereas the only disciplinary procedures revealed in the men's minutes pertained to broken furniture and general building maintenance.

²² Chambers, Tincknell & Van Loon (2004) conducted focus groups of young teenagers in England, inquiring about sexual and moral values. They found that pupils developed a consensual sexual morality through collusive sex talk, and homophobic and misogynistic views were key instruments of teenage peer regulation. Further, anxieties about heterosexual masculinity and female sexual agency were policed through verbal harassment.

fragmented literature surrounding women in higher education in Canada (Gidney, 2007), especially as women are responsible for higher rates of university completion than ever before. But still, most diversity-related content analyses focus on race and gender biases (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008). Attending to these forms of oppression, while crucial, dangerously disregards the pervasive undertones of compulsory heterosexuality and, in doing so, neglects the way in which heterosexism is thoroughly intertwined with oppression by race, class,²³ ability and sex. In isolating modalities of race and gender, curriculum studies literature has lacked perspective on how these oppressions might be wholly maintained through the indoctrination of a heterosexual citizen. Organization of content itself is restrictive in nature and greatly reinforces Thobani's (2007) exalted subject.

Wotherspoon (2002: 34) writes on education as "public place and inclusive space." She claims that the education system represents one of Canada's most confining public institutions; the institution is contradictory in character, as it defines itself by growth and progress but is marked by boundaries and limitations. The school is a unique space in Canadian culture as it fosters universal participation and mobilization of resources. It has the potential to be enlightening and empowering, but also debilitating and misleading (Wotherspoon, 2002). For these reasons, the impact of public education on cultural formation is unparalleled by other institutions, and is a necessary point of departure for addressing structural oppression.

²³ While it does not take center stage in my analysis, class as an analytic seems to be similar to heterosexism in that it is underrepresented in school curriculum. In fact, class seems to be one aspect of students' social status that is intentionally hidden. The push toward wearing uniforms in public schools exemplifies this: to protect students from bullying and feelings of unworthiness, it is seen by some as best to hide class inequity rather than challenge its structural origins. Similar strategies can be found in meal programs for low-income students where snacks are provided to 'needy' students privately so they do not experience embarrassment or further exclusion based on requiring assistance meeting basic needs. Future research on class might consider how poverty is represented as a phenomenon external to the community, or even the country, and what affect this has on disciplining students living in poverty.

According to Wotherspoon, the Canadian education system, as a system of cultural production, necessarily illuminates or reciprocates various social ills in a number of ways. The culture of this system involves learning about social interaction through lessons and relationships, as well as acquiring knowledge across academic disciplines through curriculum content. She complicates traditional notions of the school as a place of technical procedures for learning how to read and write by insisting that it is a setting for the creation and development of human relationships. Of course this social nature makes the school a place of moral navigation. Accordingly, the quality and consequences of education are varied and less predictable than its more technical reputation suggests.

It is key for a balanced and anti-oppressive approach in this analysis to adopt Wotherspoon's recognition of the socially and culturally enmeshed nature of the education system. In her advocacy for inclusivity and anti-oppressive education, she argues for an integrated curriculum that abandons Western preconceptions in favour of education for social inclusion. In terms of the institutional aim to observe, codify, measure and evaluate the intellectual and social capacities of students, the advancement of human capacity that is learned and enacted socially, evades standardization and evaluation. She reminds us that although educational institutions adapt periodically to broaden the range of learning activities, "the foundations of many educational assumptions and curricular and organizational forms have roots in the nineteenth century or earlier," and as such, "many educational practices and the knowledge they embrace continue to colonize or marginalize groups whose understandings and experiences remain outside what is given official recognition and voice" (Wotherspoon, 2002: 35).

This argument is used by Wotherspoon to build a case for rethinking the mechanisms of the education system. Her thesis is captured by the multidimensional theoretical approach

applied here to curriculum development policy. She provocatively asserts that factors affecting educational outcomes that appear to be trivial (e.g. interest in a topic, encouragement by particular teachers, informal peer interactions, emergent life circumstances) have a significant impact on educational and social pathways. Therefore, dominant sociopolitical ideologies, as they are translated into policy choices and therefore affect the dissemination of resources, critically shape the potential for certain types of students to succeed. Typically, this ideology favours students who respond to traditional curricula and guidelines, and are able to demonstrate their capacities through formal evaluative procedures.

Wotherspoon (2002) expands upon this notion of integrated curriculum by highlighting the importance of including the experience of disenfranchised immigrant groups into regular curriculum practice. She says that innovative and progressive education programs typically strive to abandon preconceived notions of how learning material should be organized, instead highlighting the diverse capacities of students through various alternative models. These include the integration of Indigenous knowledge, the experience of elders, and immigrant perspectives. Aside from these initiatives, educational programs in Canada give little attention to issues of social justice in schools, even though students face issues of poverty, violence and discrimination in personal and social spheres. Her conceptualization is used to argue for the cross-curricular inclusion of queer and gendered experiences in this project.

In her analysis of the contemporary education system, Wotherspoon (2002) also refers to how educational institutions in Canada are guided to prepare citizens (or train workers) with information and skills relevant to the increasingly global labour market. She states that, paradoxically, educators find it more difficult to integrate locally relevant information into classroom work than they do distant material from powerful institutions. This inevitably results

in students having a poor sense of how their experiences are valued as knowledge broadly. Put another way, the day-to-day experiences of students are devalued, thereby detracting attention from the vitality of social activism and community mobilization around serious ethical issues. Focus on training for the national (or global) labour market takes away from students' ability to develop a critical understanding of pertinent local issues.

Scope and Consequences of Heterosexism

Cultural heterosexism and masculinity have pervaded our male-centered ideology in Canada, and has been problematically renewed by institutions and mainstream discourse through the facing of new hegemonic challenges. As Maynard (1994) suggests with his 'dialectics of discovery,' our analysis must engage with both Foucauldian heterosexist institutions and Butlerian discursive practices of heterosexist policing in order to truly understand the successes and failures of the queer identity movement. With the theoretical discussion of the previous chapter in mind, the following section provides a more concrete account of the problem of heterosexism in Canadian schools, specifically with regard to curriculum content and revision policy.

Myth of Anti-Discrimination

Traditional school curriculum, while just one way heterosexism is enforced, disseminated or perpetuated in education, is an example how anti-discrimination policies, even if enforced, do not encompass subtle systemic oppression. For example, even though teachers and activists have been fighting for an empowered sex education for decades,²⁴ "materials that depict gay lifestyles are commonly protested if not banned from classrooms" (Wotherspoon, 1998: 98). Further to the argument against heterosexism, curriculum studies in general have focused more on overt

²⁴ For example, see Fine's (1998) commentary on adolescent females and the missing discourse of desire in her work on sexuality education curriculum in the United States.

discrimination in sex education, history and psychology than they have on implicit forms of discrimination as revealed through popular discourse across subjects.

In 2005, Temple published her analysis of ministry-approved texts in Quebec. Through a content analysis of twenty francophone Quebec secondary-school textbooks, she concluded that the texts are “persistently and overwhelmingly heterosexist” (271). The texts were used in five courses: Personal and Social Education, Moral Education, Human Biology, Family Economics, and Catholic Moral and Religious Education. In these, she found evidence of institutionalized heterosexism in four clear ways: through the maintenance of a rigid dichotomy between heterosexuality and ‘homosexuality’; through heteronormativity; through the problematization of homosexuality as unnatural, abnormal, or inferior; and through maintaining a strict distinction between male/masculine and female/feminine (Temple, 2005: 280).

As Temple notes, the education system in Quebec is unique in Canada, located in a context wherein dramatic liberalism is at war with the historical influence of the conservative Catholic Church. Quebec’s anti-discrimination policy reflects this in its respect for “moral and religious values.” One might expect, then, Temple’s finding that Quebec high school texts are more “fiercely heterosexist” (2005: 287) than are materials used in other provinces. Sex education in Quebec, for example, previously falling under the guidelines of the *Personal and Social Education* curriculum, now has no formal place in the education system as it has recently been excluded from the list of regular subjects. Even though this situation is unique to the Quebec context, sex education assumes a precarious and often ambiguously defined position in other Canadian provinces.

Temple’s (2005) study contributes to an underdeveloped and fragmented body of literature on heterosexism in Canadian education. The use of content analysis to reveal prevalent

heterosexism, as it exists across subjects both implicitly and explicitly, makes the case for analyzing other texts and discursive materials using this technique. While the findings do not directly inform this research project as they reflect a drastically different provincial education system, her methods and organizing themes lend themselves to future research on a topic that is somewhat difficult to define. In this way, Temple's findings provide a solid foundation of evidence for the existence of a heterosexual imperative in curriculum texts on which other enquiries may build. My examination of material from the English Literature 12 course in British Columbia, for example, departs from Temple's focus on courses where sexuality is handled explicitly (e.g., sex education, biology) to uncover how heterosexism has inundated material across curricula. It is in utilizing former analyses of explicitly heterosexist educational programming that I am able to point to ways in which heterosexism is implicit across disciplinary boundaries.

Context: Education in British Columbia

The organization of policy and legislation in British Columbia's education system directly impacts curriculum content. Here I review the structure of the education system in terms of curriculum content and anti-discrimination policy. The section will conclude with an examination of the recently (2008) published *B.C. Schools and Diversity* document, which recommends goals for school board policies regarding issues of discrimination. This lays the groundwork for the following chapter on research methods.

Since the enactment of the *British North America Act* in 1867, education in Canada has fallen under provincial jurisdiction. Each province and territory is responsible for establishing standards for schools, teachers, students and curriculum. British Columbia is distinctive in that

its religious schools operate within the public school system.²⁵ The province is divided into regional school districts, each governed by a school board. Each Board of Education is responsible for implementing policy decisions regarding all aspects of education within the school district, as mandated by the provincial *School Act*.²⁶

Curriculum design and revision processes differ widely across Canadian provinces and territories. In British Columbia, approval of texts is the responsibility of school boards, whereas the Ontario Ministry of Education, for example, posts a list of approved texts to be used in schools called the Trillium List. In both British Columbia and Ontario, supplementary course materials (including novels, poems and art) are submitted for approval to school boards. Each board is expected to have a process for approving these materials. The degree to which this happens in practice is unclear, as most boards do not appear to have the capacity for maintaining an organized way of dealing with new texts.

The B.C. Ministry of Education devolved the responsibility for approval of supplementary materials to school districts in 2005. Predicting that the demand for this task would overwhelm most school boards, the Education Resource Acquisition Consortium (ERAC),²⁷ an association of BC public school districts, took on responsibility for developing a novel evaluation process that school boards could use as a resource to facilitate approval of supplementary materials. In 2005, ERAC also invited independent schools to be part of the consortium. ERAC is funded by the Ministry of Education and ERAC membership fees.

²⁵ This differs from Ontario, for example, where religious schools are not considered part of the public school system.

²⁶ Retrievable at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/revisedstatutescontents.pdf> (last revised in 1996).

²⁷ See <http://www.bcerac.ca/>.

Posted on the ERAC website (2006) is a list of English and French materials that have been approved for use by other districts in the province. This allows board members to refer to the posted list and make decisions based on whether a novel, for instance, is being used in other regions instead of investigating the novel themselves. ERAC also posts its reasoning for approving texts to ensure transparency in this process. Occasionally, the Ministry of Education contracts ERAC to perform evaluations of learning resources on specific curricula. Using these evaluations, the Ministry considers new resources for Ministry Recommended status.

Ultimately, each school board has the final authority to establish local policies surrounding the selection of materials by teachers. For this reason, it is nearly impossible for teachers to keep up with which materials are being used by other teachers across the province. While there are clear benefits to this flexibility (e.g., teachers can use local art and photography to relate history lessons to the students about community), without a standardized process for approving and circulating supplementary materials, students are exposed to any range of materials depending on the teacher, the principal and the district. In other words, there is no system for determining whether a student's learning is being enriched by diverse supplementary materials or hindered by a lack thereof.

Upon the approval of each course, the B.C. Ministry of Education posts on its website a corresponding Integrated Resource Package (IRP) outlining provincially prescribed curriculum. Each IRP is a detailed document, containing everything from the rationale for the course to specified readings and suggested assessment strategies. The bulk of the IRP is dedicated to outlining curriculum content in a teacher-friendly way, prescribing student learning outcomes alongside suggested instructional techniques. For example, the English Literature 12 IRP (2003)

expects that students will “demonstrate confidence in oral reading” and suggests meeting this objective by creating a “Poetry Coffee House” where students read excerpts aloud (10).

Again, the extent to which teachers use these documents in practice is unclear. In casual conversations with several teachers from various districts, I have been given dramatically different examples of their use. To inquire into the frequency of use of the IRPs, the Ministry conducted a survey of B.C. teachers in 2002.²⁸ Approximately 3000 teachers responded, representing more than 7 percent of the teaching population in the province. The survey concluded that most teachers use their IRPs; less than 4 percent of respondents reported “never” using the document, while 64 percent indicating using it two or more times while teaching a course. This survey, though, is ambiguous due to its arbitrary definition of “using” the IRP. Teachers are said to make use of the Package if they refer to it at least twice while teaching the course. This could imply entirely different uses; for example, a teacher who refers to the prescribed reading list twice without considering learning outcomes falls into the same category as a teacher who refers to recommended strategies upon building each lesson plan.

Anti-Discrimination Policy in the B.C. Ministry of Education

Contrasting the Ministry of Education in Ontario, anti-discrimination policy pertaining specifically to education standards does not exist at the Ministry level in British Columbia. Ministry Policy and Procedures refer instead to ‘fostering optimal learning environments’ and ‘making schools safe, caring and orderly’. These procedures generally employ the language of ‘anti-bullying’ and ‘social inclusion’. For example, strategies for reducing discrimination include educating parents via online resources to detect if their child is being bullied, and directing teachers on how to react to bullying in the classroom. Put simply, issues of discrimination and

²⁸ Analysis of survey responses retrievable at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/achievement/irpsurvey.pdf>.

harassment fall under the umbrella of anti-discrimination and human rights policies enforced by the provincial government. The Ministry claims to follow these in practices. I posit that these anti-bullying and inclusion discourses do not adequately allow for consideration of the more critical components of anti-discrimination (or anti-oppression) strategies, especially because strategies against oppression need to consider understated oppression by multiple facets of the education system. Following the theoretical framework outlined in the previous chapter, tackling discrimination through anti-bullying is a highly individualized process, and thus is incapable of combatting structural oppression.

In November 2008, the B.C. Ministry of Education published *Diversity in BC Schools: A Framework*.²⁹ Committed to “celebrating the mosaic,”³⁰ the framework aims to:

assist the school system in meeting its obligations under the *Constitution Act*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *BC Human Rights Code*, the *Multiculturalism Act*, the *Official Languages Act*, the *Employment Equity Act*, and the *School Act*; and assist the school system in its ongoing efforts to create and maintain learning and working environments that are responsive to the diverse social and cultural needs of the communities it serves. (5)

The framework is designed to assist also in the development of new policies to address issues of diversity. Goals for diversity are somewhat vaguely presented as acknowledging differences among individuals and groups and “encouraging understanding, acceptance, mutual respect and inclusion” (7). Diversity is defined as an “overarching concept that relies on a philosophy of equitable participation and an appreciation of the contributions of all” (7). It incorporates both “uniqueness as individuals and our sense of belonging or identification within

²⁹ Retrievable at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity/diversity_framework.pdf.

³⁰ In March 2000, the Consortium of Diversity Education published *Celebrating the Mosaic: A Handbook and Guide to Resources for Diversity Education*. The handbook states that “characteristics of race, culture and ethnicity; sex and gender; sexual orientation and physical and mental ability [...] impact the access to and outcomes of education. Developing policy and programs specific to promoting acceptance and understanding of these characteristics will support a positive, respectful school culture.”

a group or groups” (7). In this sense, diversity refers to differences, which are more or less visible. Somewhat surprisingly, the document states that school curriculum in B.C. currently honours the diversity³¹ represented in “families, communities, the province, the nation and the world” (5). I would argue that this is simply not accurate. However, instead of berating the issue, I view the *Diversity* document optimistically; as it states a commitment by the Ministry to honoring diversity, it provides an avenue for holding the Ministry accountable for developing action plans that reflect this policy framework. The Ministry’s recent commitment to considering issues of diversity and social justice makes this an opportune time to provide evidence for institutionalized oppression in the education system.

Determining the appropriate target for strategies against systemic oppression is not made easier by this document. Outlining goals for pursuing ‘human rights’ (defined as the freedom to learn in an environment free from fear) and ‘social justice’ (defined as the full participation of all people in an equitable society), the framework asserts that school boards are responsible for protecting the right of every student to be treated with dignity and respect. This downloading of responsibility to individual school boards by the Ministry is problematic as many aspects of the education system, including curriculum content and structure, are mandated at the provincial level.

Challenges to Heterosexism, Homophobia and Heteronormativity

Valuing the work of locals as expert knowledge, the fight by local activist groups for safe environments for diverse populations contributes to strategies and recommendations in this research. The propositions made by the Pride Education Network (formerly GALEBC: Gay and

³¹ “Common elements include: equality, fair treatment, nondiscrimination, inclusion and access” (8).

Lesbian Educators of British Columbia),³² a group of lesbian, gay and bisexual educators and supportive colleagues who advocate for a positive educational environment for queer students, parents, teachers and administrators, is considered in relation to curriculum content. This group, which insists upon an urgent need for reforming the education system to support the queer community in the face of homophobia and intolerance, has already developed key projects for effecting change at the level of individual schools and policy at the provincial and school board levels. Among its priorities are cross-curricular representation of queer folk; incorporation of queer issues into literature, art and film; and inclusion of a comprehensive history of queer issues in religious discussions. The group also calls for required courses on forms of oppression and for queer fiction and nonfiction in libraries and classrooms. I highlight these expert recommendations in the last chapter of this project.

³² I was referred to the GALEBC's website (<http://www.galebc.org/>) by a member of the B.C. Ministry of Education. The site now contains a link to the PEN: <http://www.pridenet.ca/main.htm>.

Chapter Five: *Methods of Analyzing English Literature Curriculum*

Research Question

This study asks: is heterosexism maintained by contemporary institutionalized education in Canada? If so, how? To structure this inquiry, I address two subsequent questions: who embodies the exalted secondary student in Canadian society? And by what means are inclusion and exclusion continually reproduced?

Fitting with my theoretical framework in former chapters, I approach this research with the broad aim of subverting dominant discourses through critical analysis. To do so, I follow concepts from Dorothy Smith's institutional ethnography (IE) as a mode of inquiry, borrowing her classic feminist premise that "the everyday world [is] problematic" (1987). While my project does not involve interviewing human subjects (and so is not ethnographic), Smith's understanding of texts as components of social relations is indispensable here. Rather than using interviews to investigate ruling relations, I will rely on texts themselves as primary data, performing a critical discourse analysis aimed at challenging systems of knowledge and power. I will expand upon my methodological aims more thoroughly, unpacking my assumptions around deconstruction and subjugated knowledges, in the next section of this chapter. Following this, I specify my data source and method of collection.

Critical Discourse Analysis

As this research seeks to problematize what is assumed natural about the existing structure of the education system, I deny a reified conception of social reality. That is, following Georg Lukacs³³ and the subsequent critical theory of the Frankfurt School,³⁴ I suggest that the

³³ See Lukacs's (1971) *History and Class Consciousness*.

institution of education, as it exists in the midst of an array of complex social and economic processes, is commonly regarded as operating naturally, and therefore possesses an immutable quality.³⁵ Building on work by Marx and Lukacs, these methods aim to unmask the way social outcomes are prescribed by the system by explicating the bureaucratic, legal, political and cultural practices revealed through official curriculum documents.

As mentioned above, Smith pioneered this way of challenging “ruling relations” by examining what she calls “textually mediated social organization” (Carroll, 2004: 165). Her approach challenges mainstream sociological inquiry, which tends to “favour the constructed realities of privileged experts over the lived realities of its subjects” (Grahame, 2004: 181). And given that “texts are almost always implicated in ruling” (Carroll, 2004: 166), I will treat the documents of this analysis as ‘active’ (borrowing the idea of “active texts” from Smith) in organizing oppressive social relations within the institution. By “addressing the ideological practices that are used to make an institution’s processes accountable,” (Carroll, 2004: 167 of Grahame’s work on IE as a research strategy), I intend to illuminate a strategic entry point for deconstructing institutionalized heterosexism.

In structuring the material of my analysis, I employ Ian Parker’s “Discovering Discourses, Tackling Texts,”³⁶ in which he defines a discourse as “a system of statements, which constructs an object” (2004: 252). The purpose of discourse analysis is to systematize text, in its multiple forms, to understand more complex ways of talking (Parker, 2004). He argues that researchers performing discourse analytic research should go beyond traditional criteria for analyzing text to include consideration of the role of institutions and power in determining

³⁴ See Jay’s (1973) *The Dialectical Imagination*.

³⁵ See Carroll’s (2004) introduction to Part 2B, “Problematizing the Everyday World: Institutional Ethnography,” in *Critical Strategies for Social Research*.

³⁶ Chapter 18 in Carroll (2004).

discourse and ideology. Complying with this idea, I go beyond his seven criteria for distinguishing discourse to include his three auxiliary criteria, which are concerned with power and ideology. In fact, the latter three aspects will be treated as integral to this analysis.

My methods also rely on Chouliaraki and Fairclough's (2004), "Critical Analysis of Discourse,"³⁷ in which these authors argue for an "interdiscursive" (Fairclough, 1992) analysis that considers how different discursive types are mixed together. This approach recognizes Smith's analysis of "active texts" in conjunction with the idea of "hybrid texts," or "the condition in which a given text combines multiple discourses and genres (e.g., 'fictional' and 'factual')" (Carroll, 2004: 273). This approach emerges well from the intersectional theoretical approach, as it recognizes the "irreducible characteristics of complex modern discourse" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 2004: 264).

Data Source

The aforementioned theoretical propositions are grounded in the following analysis of senior secondary-level English Literature curriculum in B.C.. I examine English Literature as a discipline, rather than courses with material specifically dedicated to sex or sexuality, to address the implicit nature of heterosexism across curricula. I am particularly familiar with the course content as I completed it within the last decade, and it has not been modified significantly since. Of note is that English Literature 12 in British Columbia is an elective course, not part of the Foundation Studies required to graduate from high school. It differs drastically from the core English curriculum, and has the reputation of being a rigorous course that challenges students to perform sophisticated analyses of thematically rich pieces of literature.³⁸

³⁷ Chapter 19 in Carroll (2004).

³⁸ Inferred from personal communication with Tim Shoveller (December, 2009) and Jim Watson (January, 2009).

The Ministry of Education in British Columbia offers a standardized Graduation Program Examination for this course that has been optional for students since the 2004 revisions to the Graduation Program have been implemented over the past two years. Before this time, writing the provincial examination at the end of term was mandatory for course completion. This course, suitable only for students who have advanced literacy skills, considers a list of reputable pieces of English literature, largely from the Western canon.³⁹, a term used to denote a canon of books and more widely music and art that has been most influential in western culture. Learning guides for teachers organize the works chronologically, encouraging students to critically reflect on the historical context of each set of pieces.

Data Collection

To approach these questions, I employed a two-pronged methodology consisting of a content analysis of the Ministry-prescribed English Literature 12 curriculum document as well as the official 2007/08 provincial examination and corresponding answer key.⁴⁰ I began by analyzing the Ministry of Education's English Literature 12 Integrated Resource Package⁴¹ for teachers, last revised by the province in 2003.⁴² This publication includes the rationale of the curriculum document, the most recent changes to curriculum content, curriculum organizing strategies, the specified list of readings, strategies for integration of cross-curricular interests, suggested instruction and assessment strategies, prescribed student learning outcomes, and suggested resources. I analyzed the document using processes of open and selective coding,

³⁹ The canon is a collection of works (in this case, books and poetry) that are accepted as authentic representations of a field.

⁴⁰ This exam is called the 2007/08 Released Exam and is available at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/>.

⁴¹ Available at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/>.

⁴² I completed the course with these changes implemented.

allowing for pedagogical themes to emerge organically while purposely coding for biases of omission with regard to heterosexism.

I continued with a closer analysis of the list of prescribed texts as outlined in the Integrated Resource Package for English Literature 12. As elaborated in the previous chapter, teachers across school boards have the autonomy to supplement this list with additional learning resources, but since this course is provincially examinable, I infer that this list accurately reflects the materials to which most students are exposed. In making this assumption, I draw on my own experience taking this course; I presume that covering the extensive list of literature is challenging for students and teachers given the time allotted for course completion and thus, many courses are likely designed to follow this prescribed list closely. In informal conversations with English Literature teachers, I found there to be general agreement on sticking to the prescribed course material due to time constraints.

In choosing to assess curriculum documents, I face the potential limitation that teachers across schools and districts may rely on the IRP to various degrees. The extent to which the IRP is used could be influenced by a number of factors, not limited to the supervisory style of each principal or school board, the familiarity of the teacher with the prescribed material and peripheral resources, and the school's ability to attain additional classroom resources. In a recent survey, though, most teachers claimed to refer to the Package at least twice throughout the duration of the course.⁴³ Therefore, I assert that the IRP influences what is taught, even as teaching methods vary from teacher to teacher and across schools and districts.

The provincial examination (and answer key) analyzed in this project is the most recent exam released to the public at the time of writing, made available on the Ministry's website as of

⁴³ See Assessment and Integrated Resource Package Survey: Analysis of Responses, Achievement of Standards Branch, *Ministry of British Columbia*, October, 2002.

fall 2009. In my analysis of the exam, I compare a selection of the texts from the Prescribed Readings list to the corresponding multiple choice and short essay exam questions. Here I coded selectively for evidence of heteronormative assumptions. I also examine the content of the exam answer keys generally to explore the concentration of themes that are tested by exam questions.

Chapter Six: *Data Analysis and Discussion*

Pre-Script

As a qualitative and interpretivist researcher, my location in this research impacts to some extent the nature of my findings. This is especially true as I was intimately familiar with the English Literature course material prior to reading and analyzing its curriculum. As mentioned in the previous methods chapter, I used memoing throughout the coding process to make my engagement with the literature as transparent as possible. These memos contain my reactions to curriculum materials, discursive connections between text and interlocking systems affecting public education, and reflections on my own values biasing my interaction with the literature. I returned to the memos several times in the analysis phase; this cyclical process of memoing eventually contributed more to the overall findings than did the coding itself, as it allowed me to use the discursive processes emerging from the text to interrogate aspects of my theoretical framework.

This chapter is organized into four sections. The first describes my process of analysis. The second and third analyze and discuss the IRP and Provincial Examination and corresponding Score Guide respectively. The fourth is dedicated to synthesis and discussion of all materials taken together, and reflection back to the theory and existing literature on the topic. Here I contribute to understanding and analyzing heterosexism in public education curriculum material.

The Data Analysis Process

In coding for heterosexism, I build upon previous content analyses of school curricula (Buston & Hart, 2001; Temple, 2005) that have been organized along themes of ignoring, mentioning, essentializing, negative context, positive context and neutral context. In relating text

to these themes, I avoid dichotomizing heterosexual and homosexual relationships by observing sexed and gendered representations of identity generally. Like Temple (2005), I do not code according to the term ‘queer’ in the coding process, so it is not put in opposition to heterosexual identity. To take an example, in coding for a heteronormative assumption that implies heterosexism, I acknowledged a representation of physical strength as a male virtue to reinforce assumptions about hegemonic masculinity. In other words, I maintain the complexity of sex and gender identity through anti-essentialist codes. Since I employ theories of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity to discuss heterosexism in the context of literature (as opposed to a sex education course), I collapsed these codes into four themes: mentioning, ignoring, essentializing, and neutralizing.

Mentioning

Mentioning is used to categorize references to sexuality. These appear less often in this research than do other analytical categories because the topic of human sexuality is not dealt with as explicitly in English Literature as it is in Biology or Religion. Nonetheless, when romantic relationships are represented, mentioning is used (usually in conjunction with essentializing) to describe the nature of the representation. I note here that I do not consider mentioning heterosexual relationships to be heterosexist.⁴⁴

Ignoring

Heterosexism emerges when all relationships (and characters) are assumed to be of heterosexual orientation. Since this is so pervasive, and certainly the case in the English Literature 12 curriculum documents and exam questions, I omitted coding under this

⁴⁴ I started coding for mentioning, but since sexuality was not referred to explicitly in the exam or the score guide, I eventually only used mentioning in statements surrounding commitment to representing diversity.

category partway through the research. I include it here, though, because it is commonly used to interrogate other subject areas for evidence of heterosexism, and it might be useful for prescribing changes to English Literature in the future.

Essentializing

Essentializing is the presumption that certain facets of identity make a person who they are. It is reducing people to elements of identity that are believed to characterize their personality or behaviour. Essentializing fails to recognize the “multiple and contradictory threads to an individual’s identity” (Pratt, 2008: 53) that intersect with each other and make meaning only when compared with dominant cultural systems. Gender essentialism is an especially relevant category for this analysis, as lesbian theorists criticize feminists who dichotomize women and men for replaying and privileging heterosexism (Pratt, 2008). Theorists under Foucault’s influence tend to strongly oppose essentialism as they see subject positions as emerging discursively, rather than occurring naturally as in the humanist vision.

Neutralizing

This term is used in two ways. First, neutralizing refers to ‘gender neutral’ language that is often criticized by feminist public policy analysts as masking the gendered nature of particular issues. For example, a gender neutral term like ‘parent’ might be used to describe a population that is disproportionately made up of women. Second, neutralizing also refers to the presumption that certain human experiences are identity-neutral as everyone experiences them. This use is similar to describing a phenomenon as universal. It differs slightly from my use of essentialism because I use essentializing to refer to attributing an experience to an entire gender.

At the start of the analysis, I engaged in close reading of the data, meaning I paid attention to particular words chosen used to convey meaning. At this stage, I handwrote my general thoughts and reactions in the margins of the document, and kept peripheral thoughts and questions in a memoing notebook. On the second read through the documents, I looked at subtler messages that were implied by choice of language. I also re-read and revised the memoing notebook using Post-it notes. At this point, the memoing notebook became the prominent record of analysis.

At the start of this open coding process, I planned to use NVivo 7 software to compile broad themes across the range of materials I was examining. I have used NVivo in the coding process of several projects in the past and found it useful for staying organized and as transparent as possible. As I moved through the data, though, I realized that NVivo would not facilitate the process because the themes I was uncovering were specific to only one or two parts of the material and, therefore, not replicated enough times to be organized into broad codes and themes. I chose to stick to manual coding, printing several copies of the materials and returning to them with pencil and coloured highlighters, writing in margins, circling and labeling text, and adding Post-it notes to illustrate tensions between my own reactions.

As alluded to above, I recorded reflexive memos in a notebook as I noticed new themes emerging from the material. I often returned to these notes after days, making new notes about which discourses I thought were revealed through the text. The memos were structured in a variety of ways, from stream-of-consciousness-style writing, to point form using technical or theoretical language, to simply jotting a list of questions about the potential relevance of the historical context of authors and works. After completing the initial close reads, I returned to texts on critical discourse analysis to remind myself of vocabulary and structured methods. After

refreshing my mind with these texts, I returned to my memoing notebook and labeled certain thoughts as they are termed in methods literature. And, as mentioned, I coded selectively for themes of heterosexism and heteronormativity, but also allowed for open coding throughout this process, leaving the research open to unexpected themes and directions. This lent itself well to uncovering findings as I found myself relying more heavily on theories of hegemonic masculinity than expected.

Somewhat nontraditionally, I combine the Data Analysis and Discussion sections in this chapter. I do so because of the nature of this material – I found it impossible to isolate my analysis of themes revealed in the text from a discussion of the choices and assumptions made surrounding these themes. This said, I close this chapter with a discussion subsection for synthesizing analysis and discussion of the Integrated Resource Package and the Provincial Examinations and corresponding Score Guides. In this synthesis I provide a summative analysis, responding directly to my research question.

Data Analysis – Integrated Resource Package

The English Literature 12 Integrated Resource Package is developed by the Content and Standards Branch of the British Columbia Ministry of Education. The IRP provides basic information for curriculum implementation, including:

- a general introduction to the special features and requirements of the course;
- provincially prescribed learning outcome strategies;
- suggested instructional strategies for achieving outcomes;
- suggested assessment strategies for determining how well students are achieving the outcomes; and

- additional information, including information about provincially recommended learning resources.

The general introduction to the IRP describes the rationale for the English Literature curriculum, focusing on the intellectual, human, social, and career development of students. The aim of the course is to “enhance students’ literacy through the study of a body of works representative of the literary heritage of English-speaking peoples” (IRP: 1). Since “reading widely is an important factor in academic success,” English Literature 12 is designed to introduce works that are “sophisticated in thought and style” in order for students to “strengthen the skills needed to acquire information accurately and make informed judgments” (1). These skills are seen as “vital for the educated citizen and lifelong learner” and related to increased “interpersonal skills, aesthetic appreciation, critical judgment, ... strong communication skills, intellectual discipline, and the open-mindedness required for the world of work and further learning” (1). By exploring “a broad range of literature in its historical context,” (1) students develop awareness of the “universal human experience” and appreciation for “the disciplined use of imaginative capacity” (1).

The introductory remarks of the IRP demonstrate how the course is designed for students to develop critical thinking skills through closely reading, interpreting and analyzing works of literature. They show how this course is valued, not only for teaching advanced literacy skills, but also for producing mature and responsible intellectuals with a refined sense of artistic discernment. The goals listed in the introductory statement reveal an obvious intention to move beyond the realm of analysis of literature. The aims make compelling links between advanced analytical skills and young minds cultivated for continuous growth and the pursuit of knowledge. Use of the word “accurately” (with regard to acquiring information) alongside “informed

judgment” connotes this broader aim toward truth seeking, exceeding a mere sharpening of reading comprehension skills.

A postcolonial or postmodern feminist analysis of these introductory statements might criticize the use of the concept “universal experience” for making particularly Western assumptions. While I certainly agree with this criticism of the assumption of a universal experience, and keep it in mind in my analysis, I focus more on how the specific aims are supposedly met and the extent to which they are met through exclusionary means. To clarify, the aim for students to develop an understanding of ‘the universal human experience’ through analyzing ‘major’ works of English-speaking peoples is certainly problematic. However, I look at how the course material and evaluation techniques serve to distort students’ ideas about the human experience through a narrow representation of characters and a limited interrogation of themes and contexts. By doing this, I am not ignoring the problem of essentializing the human experience, but problematizing how this ‘universal’ experience, if it did exist, is represented by the course material. This nuance will become clearer throughout the following analytical commentary.

The focus of the introductory section of the IRP on advanced interpretation, especially as it is designed to include an appreciation of works and authors in their various contexts, creates space for representation of a diversity of characters and social contexts. I suggest, though, that the course material does quite the opposite. Returning to themes of Foucault’s discipline and Thobani’s exalted subject from the theoretical framework chapter, I suggest that this IRP is an integral point of departure for understanding the English Literature 12 curriculum as a site of institutionalized oppression. Through prescribing particular forms knowledge as truth and uncritically passing the works representative of the “literary heritage of English-speaking

peoples” (1) as the canon of significant historical contributions, oppressive structures and the exaltation of certain heroic figures and core human values are also passed.⁴⁵ In this way, space for imagination and critical thought is restricted rather than created. Critical discernment is refined toward a narrow sample of respected literary styles and themes. The introductory statement section of the IRP frames the reserved selection of works on the Prescribed Reading List and the ways students are expected to interrogate the material. In the following paragraphs, I detail these respective aspects of the IRP and show how they merge to maintain a hierarchical arrangement of celebrated knowledge.

The Prescribed Reading List is composed of 45 works from 37 English-speaking authors. It is organized into four chronological units, “Anglo-Saxon and Medieval,” “Renaissance and 17th Century,” “18th Century and Romantic,” and “Victorian and 20th Century.” Among these classic works are prose fiction, plays and poetry, ranging from *Beowulf*, through Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, to contemporary pieces such as *Dulce et Decorum Est* by Wilfred Owen. Of the 37 authors, 31 (approximately 84%) are men and 35 (95%) are of British descent (the other two are from Canada and the United States). Among the six women authors (making up 5%) are Canadian poet and novelist Margaret Atwood and American poet Emily Dickenson. This point becomes meaningful when put against the Prescribed Learning Outcomes in the IRP, which include expectations for how the students should consider issues of gender and the historical context of works in their interpretation of literature. In the following paragraphs, I provide a brief outline of the Prescribed Learning Outcomes to compare these to the authors and works on the Prescribed Reading List.

⁴⁵ Provincial exam questions around themes of values and universal human experiences commonly appear. See Appendix C, Question 1.

Prescribed Learning Outcomes are divided into seven themes, four of which correspond to the works' chronological units:⁴⁶

- Critical and Personal Response to Literature
- The Literary Tradition of the English Language
- Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Literature
- Renaissance and 17th Century Literature
- 18th Century and Romantic Literature
- Victorian and 20th Century Literature
- Literary Analysis

The first of these outcomes, Critical and Personal Response, is most important for this analysis of institutionalized heterosexism because it relates to representations of identity. Here, it is expected that students will “demonstrate an awareness of why literature is valued” and “demonstrate an awareness of the influences of gender, ethnicity, and class on literature” (A-3). As it pertains to my analysis, this aim directly relates to my argument for the inclusion of social justice issues in the Prescribed Learning Outcomes of English Literature. Expectations under this category of learning outcomes allude to the need for students to understand how economic and sociopolitical forces affect the form and content of literature. Keeping with this aim would open opportunity for discussions of social justice issues, even as they pertain to intersectional modes of identity.

Also included in this Critical and Personal Response category is the expectation for students to “demonstrate respect for ideas and values expressed in literary works” and “demonstrate a willingness to make personal connections with characters and experiences in

⁴⁶ Appendix E, Prescribed Learning Outcomes, English Literature 12.

literary works.” To understand ways that such invisible oppression as heterosexism can remain institutionalized, I juxtapose the critical awareness embodied by statements in the previous paragraph with the expectation for students to appreciate and identify with a particular canon of literature. Demonstrating respect for ideas expressed in literary works and engaging in critical analysis can, of course, be done concurrently, but the supposition that students will manage this dual critique while fulfilling the expectation to demonstrate personal connections with characters and experiences is unsettling. At the very least, the directives contrast each other. More starkly, the list of learning outcomes under this category demonstrates a collision of conflicting discourses: critical, structural thinking, and pressure for students to conform to an existing analysis of what constitutes important literature.⁴⁷ The assumption that students should attempt to relate to experiences of characters who do not reflect their social histories becomes problematic when, collectively, these experiences represent and are represented by a selective social history. Put plainly, demonstrating respect for works on the prescribed reading list is another way ideas and themes by predominantly white male authors of British descent are legitimized as the primary contribution of knowledge by English-speaking peoples.

In 1996, the English Literature 12 course was expanded chronologically from terminating at World War I to including contemporary 20th-century works. Writers of these changes boast a “range of voices throughout history who have contributed to the development of our English literary heritage,” including “writing by men and women from various social classes and ethnic backgrounds” (2). This claim is misleading. As mentioned above, not all authors included on the prescribed reading list descend from the United Kingdom, with two North American authors,

⁴⁷ I use the word ‘important’ here because I recognize the works on this list as being of high quality and major influence. The problem is how they then constitute what is important for students to know. In other words, I am not criticizing the calibre of the list, but its lack of diverse contents of equally important cultural influence.

Emily Dickenson and Margaret Atwood, appearing in the 20th-century unit. This effectively expands the criteria for what is considered part of our “literary heritage,” but is not what is brought to mind by the claim to represent a range of voices from of a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. The fact that this claim is made, though, opens the potential for including the work of eloquent, influential women writers and racially diverse peoples. In the Victorian and 20th Century period, works by the following influential woman writers could have easily diversified the reading list by author and theme: Maya Angelou, Anne Sexton, Dorothy Parker, Sylvia Plath, Ai, Lucy Maud Montgomery, Jane Austen, Gertrude Stein, Louisa May Alcott, Elizabeth Smart, Charlotte Bronte, Adrienne Rich, Gwendolyn Brooks, Lucille Clifton, Alice Walker, George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), and Mary Oliver. This list is not nearly exhaustive. If the Critical and Personal Response section of the Prescribed Learning Outcomes is indeed concerned with the influences of gender, race and class on literature, recognizing how rich in diversity are contributions to the heritage of English-speaking peoples is an important place to start.

As is likely becoming clear, my assessment of the Prescribed Reading List and Learning Outcomes relies on a surface consideration of gender, not sexuality. I justify my use of gender as an analytic using the theoretical connection between hegemonic masculinity, heteronormativity and heterosexism. Of course, this is only one cursory way of examining the list. Future research should interrogate the content of the list in other ways, namely, looking at how the hero figures or protagonists presented in each work either impede or give opportunity for the consideration of gender, race and class in English Literature 12.

Data Analysis – Provincial Exams and Corresponding Score Guides

English Literature 12 Provincial exams are made up of 30 multiple-choice and three written response questions. Of the first 23 multiple-choice questions, 16 (nearly 70%) are

Literary Selections (where students are asked about anything from the thematic content of selected works to literary devices) and seven (30%) are Recognition of Authors and Titles (where students are given a quote and asked to identify either the author or the title of the work). The last seven questions pertain to a Sight Passage that students are asked to read (for the first time) to test their interpretative skills. The following analysis contains examples of material I flagged for contributing to heterosexism.

To gain an initial understanding of what the questions represented, I labeled each multiple-choice question with the work, the author, and the general topic of interrogation (whether it was asking about a theme, a symbol, and poetic device, etc.). For example, I labeled Question 6 (see Appendix C): “On His Blindness; Milton; metaphor/symbol.” I was then able to decipher how students were expected to comprehend the material generally (e.g., students were expected to recall aspects of plot and character, as well as understand subtle themes and recognize devices employed by authors).

From this step, I moved into a closer reading of the exam questions, apart from the score guide. I analyzed all of the provided multiple-choice responses (regardless of the correct response) for the multiple intersecting discourses they represented. At this stage, I also made discursive connections between the question being asked and the potential responses provided. For example, the following question reveals discourses surrounding womanhood.

3. In Shakespeare’s Sonnet 130 (“My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun”), why does the speaker state that his mistress “treads on the ground”?

- A. She is a sensible woman.
- B. She is beautiful and attainable.
- C. **He is praising her as a real woman.**
- D. He is disappointed by her plainness.

Here I looked at how the mistress in Shakespeare's sonnet is characterized by the choices.

Connecting the mistress' eyes to each choice reveals a different assumption about femininity. If her eyes are not like the sun *and* she is sensible, clearly sensibility and beauty are unrelated, or, even further, are not able to coexist. If her eyes are not like the sun and she is "beautiful and attainable," women are ornaments for ownership by men, with the particularly attractive ornaments less easily possessed. If her eyes are not like the sun and she is "a 'real' woman," again, authenticity and beauty are positioned as opposites. Finally, if her eyes are not like the sun and therefore she is a disappointing mate in her plainness, women are ultimately valued for their physical appeal.

After analyzing the exam, I lined up questions with answers provided by the score guide. I found this to reveal another layer of discursive assumptions, as the themes of the works on the reading list were uncovered. While it was not my purpose to critique the authors and works themselves, assessment of the themes presented in the poetry itself is within the scope of my analysis as these reveal discursive assumptions (through the choice of a poem for the reading list and the way it is interrogated by the exam question). Of note is that I found this to be a difficult tension to straddle throughout the analysis process. My reaction to hegemonic masculinity was often related to, for example, Anglo-Saxon values presented by the hero figures in such 'classic' works as *Beowulf* rather than the style of interrogation designed by the exam writers. Through memoing, though, I was able to check my reaction to the material against my reaction to how it was treated by the exam questions. As I will elaborate in the following section, I often felt the exam questions fell short of interrogating the values presented by the poems themselves, especially as this is a stated goal of the course (for students to consider the context in which the works were written).

Taken together, the following question and its corresponding answer exemplify this tension.

7. In *The Rape of the Lock*, when Pope writes, “So ladies in romance assist their knight, / Present the spear, and arm him for the fight,” what has just happened?

- A. Belinda has just pulled out a “deadly bodkin.”
- B. Chloe and Sir Plume have just confronted each other.
- C. **Clarissa has just offered a “two-edged weapon” to the Baron.**
- D. The Baron’s queen of spades defeats Belinda’s king of clubs.

The above question, as it pertains to heterosexism, reflects the intricacy of this analysis. The poem itself is referring to traditional roles of men and women as they existed in Alexander Pope’s time. Clarissa, a supporting female character, is called to assist the male hero figure, played by the knight. Implied here, of course, is the role of the woman to serve men behind the scenes, and the role of the man to engage in combat or work in the public sphere. This question, then, does not directly reveal heterosexist assumptions on the parts of the exam writers or the course material, as it is directly interrogating the plot of the work. For this reason, I predict my critique will be met with skepticism, since not every question can or should interrogate themes in terms of gender and sexuality. But I consider this question, in the context of the entire exam and the prescribed learning outcomes outlined in the IRP, to contain heterosexist essentialism because of the way in which it neglects to interrogate both the theme revealed by this segment of the work, as well as its general context. This is an example of a question that is asked so neutrally, it reinforces gender stereotypes (hegemonic masculinity, specifically) by ignoring them. Not only is the danger of the question’s neutrality easily avoided, the quote extracted from this work provides an opportunity to critically interpret the sociopolitical orientation of the era, which is a stated aim in the IRP. In fact, I would argue that the theme of this question should not be avoided, but explicated to challenge the historical construction of modern day gendered

assumptions. At the very least, if writers are not prepared to orient the question around the historical context of the work, another plot point could have been chosen to test students' knowledge of Pope's work that does not neutralize the relationship between genders presented in the story.

Heterosexism also emerged through gender essentialism. To demonstrate, here is the multiple-choice question corresponding to one of the few works on the list by a female author (Margaret Atwood):

16. In "Disembarking at Quebec,"⁴⁸ which article suggests the speaker's alienation from her surroundings?

- A. her pink shawl
- B. her fine bonnet
- C. her coral broach
- D. her red stockings

I include this example because it illustrates an entirely problematic treatment of Atwood's piece. This question stands out from all of the others in the exam, as it requires the student to recall from memory an item that does not explicate the theme of the work. Additionally, the list of potential responses is made up entirely of clothing accessories; this stands out not only because the few other questions requiring rote memorization on the exam have to do with authors and characters and not objects, but also because of the list's obvious slant toward items that are typically feminine. On this note, it is of no doubt to me that the writers of this exam question did not intend to have such a stereotypically feminine list of responses to the question interrogating Atwood's poem. Instead, I interpret this as a demonstration of how ideas of what constitutes the ideal (heterosexual) woman are so entrenched that they rarely enter conscious thought enough to be questioned. The writers of the above question might be so accustomed to imagining a woman

⁴⁸ See Appendix A.

according to her role in the master Canadian narrative that their pairing of Atwood's poem with a list of clothing accessories is entirely overlooked.

The fact that it is unintentional or coincidental, though, is not at all cause for dismissal. In fact, to me this reveals the very depth of the problem of heterosexism in Canadian education, and across institutions for that matter. (Hetero)sexist assumptions are so covert that they easily become part of a 'common-sense' way of viewing the world, and are swept under the rug of what constitutes 'oppressive' or discriminatory knowledge.

Some combinations of exam questions and answers reveal both gender essentializing and neutralizing. One example is the Sight Passage in the 2007/08 Released Exam.⁴⁹ The selection, from *A Child's Christmas in Wales* by Dylan Thomas, is set in Britain in the 1920s and features a group of boys going caroling. This case is unlike some of the former examples in that the passage itself does not reveal heterosexist assumptions. The choice of the exam writers to select a work that represents boyhood in particular, while it certainly misses an opportunity to diversify using a piece of literature outside of the Specified Reading List, also does not provide a sound example of heterosexism. Evidence of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity is found, though, in the interrogation of the work by the exam questions, as well as in the possible responses provided in the Score Guide corresponding to the Written Response question. The question for Written Response is, "Show how the author re-creates the experience of childhood in the passage." Here the category 'childhood' neutralizes Thomas's depiction of the boys. In other words, the experience of the boy characters in the piece is represented as the universal childhood experience. This is revealed through the Score Guide with the following items:

The passage employs *childlike* diction and sentence structure: words like "whoed"; several sentences start with "And."

⁴⁹ See Appendix B.

The *child's* imaginative world is recreated through the use of fanciful figurative language: “as of old and unpleasant and maybe webfooted men wheezing in caves.”

The passage accurately depicts a *child's* fear of the dark and the unknown and the tendency to fill the darkness with imaginary monsters.

The passage shows the rapidly changing emotions of *childhood* in the transformation of the boys' mood from terror to comfort and the joy of jelly.⁵⁰

Gender essentialism also occurs in the Score Guide through the unchecked use of gendered assumptions:

The passage authentically depicts the bravado of boyhood: the boys hold stones in their hands “in case.”

The above Sight Passage demonstrates how subtle hegemonic masculinity can emerge through neutralizing and essentializing. As I suggested in the theoretical chapter of this project, challenging the prevalence of hegemonic masculinity is the necessary first step for revealing the understated infiltration of heteronormativity. Even though the themes of the story by Thomas are unrelated to sexuality and thus do not directly imply heterosexism, the gendered assumptions present in the way the work is expected to be interpreted exacerbate assumptions made with regard to sexuality. The subjects of the work by this famous author are thought to typify boyhood, and because of this, the reader likely makes assumptions about their experiences, personalities, and desires. To me, this example reiterates that only by recognizing how components of hegemonic masculinity are taken for granted will seemingly invisible heterosexist assumptions be made evident.

Discussion – Synthesizing the Integrated Resource Package, Examination, and Score Guide

⁵⁰ Emphasis added.

As aforementioned, perhaps the richest findings of this analysis emerge from relating the Integrated Resource Package to the Examination and Score Guide. This has so far been done indirectly, but the links are made more transparent in the following section.

An interesting point of intersection is found in the directives of the Score Guides. At the bottom of each list of potential responses to Written Response questions, the examiners leave room for varied interpretations of the question, assuring the grader that “Other responses are possible.” This fits with the Prescribed Learning Outcomes of the IRP, especially in the Critical and Personal Response category, as students are encouraged to develop open-mindedness and reflect on various social, political and historical forces at play in the context of literary works. The Score Guide and the IRP complement each other in this way, but, at the same time, refute each other. The Learning Outcomes insist upon consideration of context, and neither the exam questions themselves or the responses provided in the Score Guide reflect this objective. It is merely captured by “Other responses are possible.” In short, the examinations and corresponding guides fall short of evaluating the extent to which students are engaged in critical thought surrounding issues of gender, race or class in the historical context of each work.⁵¹

Along with each list of responses is a numerical score guide detailing expectations for each score. A score of 6/6 is rewarded for the response to the Sight Passage that

combines a perceptive understanding of the passage with a detailed description of the topic. The analysis includes pertinent references. The ideas are focused and clearly expressed. The response, however, need not be error-free.⁵²

Under these guidelines, we might expect there is considerable room to respond outside of the prescribed list of answers. This corresponds to the goals set by the IRP, encouraging students to react personally and discriminatingly to works presented. However, the fact that the criteria for

⁵¹ For example, see Appendix F, Written Response to Shakespearean Drama Score Guide.

⁵² See Appendix G Score Guide for numerical list.

responses is left so open is disconcerting because it leaves room for the opposite to occur: students may be rewarded for expressing entirely non-critical ideas. A numerical score that rewards a student with the highest possible numerical score should include criteria for assessing the context of the works. While it may be argued that in the case of the Response to Shakespearean Drama, there is not room for considerations external to the play itself. This score guide remains relatively consistent, though, across all written response questions.

Chapter Seven: *Conclusions and Future Directions*

This study demonstrates evidence of heterosexism in English Literature 12 in B.C. through the unchallenged processes of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity in curriculum documents. In doing so, this study contributes to the body of theory surrounding the issue of institutionalized heterosexism. Since heterosexism is difficult to explicate due to its subtle and implicit nature, it is important to realize which other assumptions or forms of essentializing and privileging lead to the privileging of heterosexual individuals and relationships. The analysis of these documents illustrates connections between gendered assumptions and the production and maintenance of a heterosexist hegemony. In other words, it shows that forms of sexism or gender role rigidity are heterosexist.

This research provides support for ideas advanced by critical education theorists. The general findings related to institutionalized oppression develop Thobani's (2007) work in *Exalted Subjects* specifically as they bring the institution of public education into consideration as a system of processes through which the exaltation of an exclusive citizen in the Canadian national imaginary is enacted. Future theoretical work on the exalted subject-citizen can develop these ideas, as well as those advanced by Foucault, by synthesizing her intersectional approach and the concentration on public education of this research.

The evidence of heterosexist assumptions found here reveals a myth of inclusion of diverse perspectives in the English Literature 12 curriculum. Through examination of the curriculum documents, I reveal that there is a dissonance between the Ministry's aims (as indicated in the *Diversity* framework), course aims (in the English Literature 12 IRP), course content (of the Prescribed Reading List), and the way in which course material is interrogated by

the provincial examination and corresponding score guide. Juxtaposing these publications provides a useful point of departure for challenging dominant ideologies and systemic oppression in public education, as the ideal-based nature of the education system becomes clear when aims and content are taken together. This method of juxtaposition is valuable for analyses outside of the English Literature curriculum and the topic of heterosexism as it can be used to interrogate the curriculum documents of other courses for other forms of systemic oppression.

I have shown, optimistically, that there is space in the English Literature 12 curriculum for consideration of social justice issues that need not take away from students' appreciation of works in the Western canon. Corresponding to the aim of considering the broader sociopolitical context in which each work was written, students can be challenged to acknowledge how issues of class, gender and ethnicity impact the themes of each work. This step would not require a complete reformation of the curriculum, as this aim already exists. It would require a commitment to taking seriously this aim of the course, perhaps by making it more central to the IRP.

Suggestions

The widespread problem of systemic heterosexism in public education needs to be challenged on many fronts. This will necessarily include thinking critically about ways in which the entire disciplinary structure and evaluation methods might better meet social justice aims in schools. There are many small and cost-efficient ways, though, that members of the curriculum Content Standards Branch of B.C. could make immediate improvements to existing curriculum documents.

The English Literature 12 IRP needs to be reconsidered in terms of how its aims embody contrasting ideologies. A broad aim of the course is to produce sophisticated intellectuals who

are prepared to move on to higher education. This aim is complicated by the fact that the IRP contains the aim to encourage students' critical thinking skills, while at the same time requiring students to demonstrate their appreciation for and relation to characters and themes presented in the works. This latter aim becomes especially problematic in the context of the works provided: the list generally represents an exclusive white, masculine experience.

Perhaps the simplest step to challenging systemic heterosexism is by amending course content directly. Revising the Prescribed Reading List will effectively lessen problems of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity, and therefore heterosexism, in the English Literature 12 curriculum. Especially in the latter chronological units of the course (including Victorian Era and 20th Century), the list can be simply adjusted to include the influential writing of women and people of colour. I included some examples of diverse authors in the discussion section of this paper.

The Pride Education Network (PEN) of B.C. (formerly GALEBC) has developed workshops that have recently been incorporated into Professional Development (Pro-D) Days by the B.C. Teachers Federation (BCTF).⁵³ The PEN Workshop Committee also offers additional workshops to groups such as teachers, counselors, staff, administrators, student teachers, parents and students, though these are limited due to restricted resources. Topics that are relevant to this discussion of heterosexism include, but are not limited to:⁵⁴

- Heterosexual Privilege
- Definitions and Terminology
- Accuracy and Myths

⁵³ See the BCTF Professional Development site for examples:
<http://www.bctf.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx>

⁵⁴ See <http://www.pridenet.ca/main.htm> Workshops and Projects page for a list of workshops offered by topic.

- Different forms of homophobia
- Different forms of acceptance
- Presenting Positive Role Models for Youth
- Making connections between heterosexism and racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, etc.
- Sharing/discussing participants' views about homosexuality, homophobia and heterosexism
- Famous lesbians and gays in history
- Incorporating awareness of G/L/B/T issues in a variety of subject areas and grade levels

A couple of years ago, the PEN (at the time, GALEBC) held a discussion what an “Ideal School” would look like, and created a list of recommended projects. They organized these by priority, and determined targets of “pressure points”: the Province, the School Board, or the Individual School(s). The following are a selection of suggestions pertinent to this research on strategies against heterosexist curriculum:

- Representation of queers throughout curriculum. Queer issues should be considered a cross-curricular issue;
- Provincially required and approved queer-friendly materials;
- Queer fiction and non-fiction in libraries and classrooms;
- Insert queers into history, literature, art, film;
- Blackboard depicting queer-friendly/multicultural novels for novel studies

Workshops by PEN have also considered issues surrounding administration, teachers, schoolyard design, student clubs, and classroom dynamics. Since this work has already been done, I recommend the Province seriously consider recommendations advanced by PEN. The

recommendations by PEN can also be useful for social inclusion strategies generally, corresponding well with assertions by multidimensionality theorists. It is my hope that the findings of this research motivate members of the Ministry to recognize the valuable strategies already developed by local experts.

Limitations and Potential Future Directions

Perhaps the most obvious limitation to this study is the inability to generalize directly from these results to the broader Canadian context or to material taught outside of the English Literature 12 class. As I mentioned earlier, the purpose of narrowing in on the English Literature curriculum is to illuminate how heterosexism, as it is often implicit, is able to pervade course material. I have demonstrated how this theme translates to other courses and policy documents.

My choice to examine texts rather than engage in an institutional ethnography does make it impossible to explore how teachers and students engage with texts and the extent to which course curriculum is enmeshed in school culture. Similarly, without observing the dynamics of the classroom, we are unable to examine dialogues held between and among teachers and students around the themes presented in the literature. The view of each teacher, as well as the teacher's level of autonomy in the school and the school's autonomy within the board, will affect the reading list, the use of supplementary materials, the themes illuminated, and the way in which themes are discussed; the centrality of themes outside the IRP are likely to vary somewhat, both regionally and from class to class, the extent of which could be the topic of future research.

Another limitation relates to teachers' use of the IRP. The IRP usage survey, administered to teachers by the B.C. Ministry, organized its responses into broad categories. Whether teachers used the IRP daily or twice in the semester, their usage fell into the same broad

category, “referred two at least twice in the semester.” This does not give an accurate picture of how influential the IRP document is on teaching strategies and lesson plans. Looking at the IRPs is still valuable, though, in terms of deciphering dominant ideologies revealed through major course aims and curriculum content.

Not discussed in this paper is the power of the school board in governing the direction of each school. As mandated by the province, school boards are expected to have processes for approving and refusing all supplementary materials (such as novels or poetry, in the case of English Literature) to be used by each teacher. Whether or not this process is implemented is unclear, as none of the English Literature teachers I interrogated informally were aware of this.

While the methods employed in this study have the advantage of being unobtrusive, content analysis limits the scope of this study to engaging with written material only. Future studies would benefit from examining teaching practices, observing classroom dynamics, communicating with students and teachers, and analyzing resources outside of the prescribed curriculum that are brought into the classroom. Following principles of inclusive institutional ethnography, selective interviewing of queer students would also take the research in a beneficial direction, as would structured interviews with students and parents across sexual orientations. Because institutionalized heterosexism and hegemonic masculinities are performed by actors throughout the system, supplementary analyses involving interviewing stakeholders are required.

Future research might explore the grading criteria of the Score Guides in alternate ways. For example, it might be interesting to submit responses to an exam that contained themes of social justice, or at least criticize the social assumptions revealed by the themes of sight passages, to see how graders receive them. Without this component, it is impossible to understand the extent to which other responses are possible.

Theoretically, this study treats the concept of sexuality as coherent and the idea of queer identity as exhaustive, preventing it from accounting for the multiple modalities of sexuality, gender, race, class and ethnicity that intersect to constitute identity. Because of this, my findings do not challenge the intricacies of multidimensional oppression. In other words, by neglecting to pursue the ways in which, for example, heteronormativity and whiteness intersect in institutionalized discourse, this picture of the exalted subject in the Canadian national imaginary requires further attention. Further research on this theme would benefit from an intersectional analysis of the identity politics that are created and replicated through power and privilege.

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APPENDIX A – Disembarking at Quebec from Specified Reading List

Disembarking at Quebec

By Margaret Atwood

*Is it my clothes, my way of walking,
the things I carry in my hand
- a book, a bag with knitting-
the incongruous pink of my shawl*

this space cannot hear

*or is it my own lack
of conviction which makes
these vistas of desolation,
long hills, the swamps, the barren sand, the glare
of sun on the bone-white
driftlogs, omens of winter,
the moon alien in day-
time a thin refusal*

The others leap, shout

Freedom!

*The moving water will not show me
my reflection.*

The rocks ignore.

*I am a word
in a foreign language.*

APPENDIX B – Sight Passage from Released Exam 2007/08

from *A Child's Christmas in Wales*

1 Bring out the tall tales now that we told by the fire as the gaslight bubbled like a diver. Ghosts whooped like owls in the long nights when I dared not look over my shoulder; animals lurked in the cubbyhole under the stairs where the gas meter ticked. And I remember that we went singing carols once, when there wasn't the shaving of a moon to light the flying streets. At the end of a long road was a drive that led to a large house, and we stumbled up the darkness of the drive that night, each one of us afraid, each one holding a stone in his hand in case, and all of us too brave to say a word. The wind through the trees made noises as of old and unpleasant and maybe webfooted men wheezing in caves. We reached the black bulk of the house.

2 "What shall we give them? Hark the Herald?"

3 "No," Jack said, "Good King Wenceslas. I'll count three."

4 One, two, three, and we began to sing, our voices high and seemingly distant in the snowfelled darkness round the house that was occupied by nobody we knew. We stood closer together, near the dark door.

5 *Good King Wenceslas looked out
On the Feast of Stephen...*

6 And then a small, dry voice, like the voice of someone who has not spoken for a long time, joined our singing: a small, dry, eggshell voice from the other side of the door: a small dry voice through the keyhole. And when we stopped running we were outside our house; the front room was lovely; balloons floated under the hot-water-bottle-gulping gas; everything was good again and shone over the town.

7 "Perhaps it was a ghost," Jim said.

8 "Perhaps it was trolls," Dan said, who was always reading.

9 "Let's go in and see if there's any jelly left," Jack said. And we did that.

Dylan Thomas

APPENDIX C – Multiple Choice Questions from Released Exam 2007/08

Literary Selections

1. In *Beowulf*, which Anglo-Saxon value is represented by Herot?
 - A. power
 - B. heroism
 - C. boasting
 - D. community

2. In “The Prologue” to *The Canterbury Tales*, how is the Parson described?
 - A. “a very festive fellow”
 - B. “a fat and personable priest”
 - C. “rich in holy thought and work”
 - D. “an easy man in penance-giving”

3. In Shakespeare’s Sonnet 130 (“My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun”), why does the speaker state that his mistress “treads on the ground”?
 - A. She is a sensible woman.
 - B. She is beautiful and attainable.
 - C. He is praising her as a real woman.
 - D. He is disappointed by her plainness.

4. Which quotation contains personification?
 - A. “*Noli me tangere*, for Caesar’s I am”
 - B. “No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move”
 - C. “Nor what the potent Victor in his rage / Can else inflict”
 - D. “and wanton fields / To wayward Winter reckoning yields”

5. In “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,” on what does “dull sublunary” love depend?
 - A. spiritual union
 - B. physical presence
 - C. common attitudes
 - D. shared experience

6. In “On His Blindness,” which metaphor does Milton use to represent his literary powers?
 - A. a talent
 - B. a yoke
 - C. a kingly state
 - D. the dark world

7. In *The Rape of the Lock*, when Pope writes “So ladies in romance assist their knight, / Present the spear, and arm him for the fight,” what has just happened?
 - A. Belinda has just pulled out a “deadly bodkin.”
 - B. Chloe and Sir Plume have just confronted each other.
 - C. Clarissa has just offered a “two-edged weapon” to the Baron.
 - D. The Baron’s queen of spades defeats Belinda’s king of clubs.

8. Which characteristic of “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” can be seen as Romantic?
 - A. It celebrates the supernatural.
 - B. It is written in iambic pentameter.
 - C. It emphasizes reason over emotion.
 - D. It deals with the lives of common people.

9. "The guests are met, the feast is set"
Which literary technique is used in the above quotation?
A. aside
B. caesura
C. apostrophe
D. cacophony
10. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," how do the sailors feel when the albatross first appears?
A. joyful
B. fearful
C. enraged
D. indifferent
11. According to the speaker in "Apostrophe to the Ocean," with what attitude does the ocean treat humanity?
A. anger
B. respect
C. disdain
D. generosity
12. In Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Sonnet 43 ("How do I love thee? Let me count the ways"), what does the speaker reveal about herself?
A. her desire to be loved
B. her love for her beloved
C. her love for her dying father
D. her need to be with her beloved
13. "And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star"
In "Ulysses," to whom does "this gray spirit" refer?
A. Achilles
B. Ulysses
C. Tennyson
D. Telemachus
14. What does Arnold lament in "Dover Beach"?
A. the loss of religious faith
B. the loss of romantic love
C. the loss of military strength
D. the loss of respect for nature
15. In "The Hollow Men," how does the speaker suggest that the world will end?
A. violently
B. gloriously
C. ominously
D. anticlimactically
16. In "Disembarking at Quebec," which article suggests the speaker's alienation from her surroundings?
A. her pink shawl
B. her fine bonnet
C. her coral brooch
D. her red stockings

APPENDIX D – Specified Reading List

Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

- from *Beowulf*
- Geoffrey Chaucer, from *The Canterbury Tales*, “The Prologue”
- “Bonny Barbara Allan”
- from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Renaissance and 17th Century

- Sir Thomas Wyatt, “Whoso List to Hunt”
- Christopher Marlowe, “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”
- Sir Walter Raleigh, “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd”
- William Shakespeare, Sonnet 29 (“When in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes”)
- Sonnet 116 (“Let me not to the marriage of true minds”)
- Sonnet 130 (“My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun”)
- *Hamlet, King Lear or The Tempest*
- John Donne, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”; “Death, Be Not Proud”
- Robert Herrick, “To the Virgins”
- John Milton, “On His Blindness”; from *Paradise Lost*
- from *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*

18th Century and Romantic

- Lady Mary Chudleigh, “To the Ladies”
- Alexander Pope, from *The Rape of the Lock*
- Jonathan Swift, “A Modest Proposal”
- Robert Burns, “To a Mouse”
- William Blake, “The Tiger”; “The Lamb”
- Thomas Gray, “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard”
- William Wordsworth, “My Heart Leaps Up”; “The World Is Too Much with Us”
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”
- George Gordon, Lord Byron, “Apostrophe to the Ocean”
- Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Ode to the West Wind”
- John Keats, “Ode to a Nightingale”; “When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be”

Victorian and 20th Century

- Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “Ulysses”
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Sonnet 43 (“How do I love thee? Let me count the ways”)
- Robert Browning, “My Last Duchess”
- Emily Brontë, “Song”
- Matthew Arnold, “Dover Beach”
- Thomas Hardy, “The Darkling Thrush”
- Emily Dickinson, “Because I Could Not Stop for Death”
- Wilfred Owen, “*Dulce et Decorum Est*”
- William Butler Yeats, “The Second Coming”
- T.S. Eliot, “The Hollow Men”
- Dylan Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night”
- Stevie Smith, “Pretty”
- Margaret Atwood, “Disembarking at Quebec”

APPENDIX E – Prescribed Learning Outcomes

**CRITICAL AND
PERSONAL RESPONSE
TO LITERATURE**



It is expected that students will:

- demonstrate an awareness of why literature is valued
- demonstrate an awareness of the influences of gender, ethnicity, and class on literature
- demonstrate respect for ideas and values expressed in literary works
- demonstrate an appreciation of oral and visual performance of literary works
- identify and interpret issues and themes in literary works
- demonstrate a willingness to be open-minded and respectful of diverging interpretations of literary works
- demonstrate a willingness to make personal connections with characters and experiences in literary works
- create personal responses to literature through writing, speech, or visual representation
- demonstrate confidence in oral reading

**THE LITERARY
TRADITION OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
(Classical to Present)**



It is expected that students will:

- demonstrate a knowledge of works within the literary tradition of the English language, beyond the specified readings
- demonstrate an awareness of both male and female voices within the literary tradition of the English language
- analyse multiple works of a single author within the literary tradition of the English language
- compare the treatments of themes or literary forms within the literary tradition of the English language

**ANGLO-SAXON AND
MEDIEVAL
LITERATURE**



It is expected that students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of the following literary works and an awareness of how they reflect the attitudes, values, and issues of the Middle Ages:
 - from *Beowulf*,
 - “The Coming of Grendel,”
 - “The Coming of Beowulf,”
 - “The Battle with Grendel,”
 - “The Burning of Beowulf’s Body”/“The Farewell”
 - from *The Canterbury Tales*, “The Prologue”
 - “Bonnie Barbara Allan” (ballad)
 - from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, (“At the Green Chapel” section)

**RENAISSANCE AND
17TH CENTURY
LITERATURE**



It is expected that students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of the following literary works and an awareness of how they reflect the attitudes, values, and issues of the Renaissance and 17th century:
 - Sir Thomas Wyatt, “Whoso List to Hunt”

- Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love"
- Sir Walter Raleigh, "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd"
- William Shakespeare,
Sonnets 29, 116, 130;
Hamlet, King Lear, or The Tempest
- John Donne,
"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,"
"Death be not proud..."
- Robert Herrick, "To the Virgins"
- John Milton,
"On His Blindness";
from *Paradise Lost*, Book I, lines 1-263
- Pepys, "The Fire of London"

18TH CENTURY AND ROMANTIC LITERATURE



It is expected that students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of the following literary works and an awareness of how they reflect the attitudes, values, and issues of the 18th century:
 - Lady Mary Chudleigh, "To the Ladies"
 - Alexander Pope, from "The Rape of the Lock" (Canto III and V excerpts)
 - Jonathan Swift, "A Modest Proposal"
 - Robert Burns, "To a Mouse"
 - William Blake, "The Tyger," "The Lamb"
 - Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"
- demonstrate an understanding of the following literary works and an awareness of how they reflect the attitudes, values, and issues of the Romantic age:
 - William Wordsworth,
"My Heart Leaps Up,"
"The World Is Too Much with Us"
 - Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"
 - George Gordon, Lord Byron, "Apostrophe to the Ocean"
 - Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind"
 - John Keats,
"Ode to a Nightingale,"
"When I Have Fears..."

VICTORIAN AND 20TH CENTURY LITERATURE



It is expected that students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of the following literary works and an awareness of how they reflect the attitudes, values, and issues of the Victorian Age:
 - Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Ulysses,"
 - Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Sonnet 43
 - Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess"
 - Emily Brontë, "Song"
 - Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach"
 - Thomas Hardy, "The Darkling Thrush"
 - Emily Dickinson, "Because I Could Not Stop for Death"
- demonstrate an understanding of the following literary works and an awareness of how they reflect the attitudes, values, and issues of the 20th century:

- Wilfred Owen, "*Dulce et Decorum Est*"
- William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming"
- T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men"
- Dylan Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night"
- Stevie Smith, "Pretty"
- Margaret Atwood, "Disembarking at Quebec"

LITERARY ANALYSIS



It is expected that students will:

- support a position by providing evidence from literary works
- recognize the use of key literary terms, devices, and techniques in context
- evaluate the purpose and effectiveness of literary devices, forms, and techniques in literary works
- identify the distinguishing characteristics of literary genres
- demonstrate an understanding of recurring images, motifs, and symbols by evaluating their purpose and effectiveness
- identify distinguishing characteristics of a writer's style, such as diction, syntax, rhythm, and imagery
- use formal language for literary analysis
- apply critical criteria to unfamiliar works

APPENDIX F – Written Response Score Guide for *Part C: Shakespearean Drama*2. *Hamlet (1600–1601) (III. iv. 9–21)*

Hamlet: Now, Mother, what's the matter?

Queen: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Hamlet: Mother, you have my father much offended.

Queen: Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Hamlet: Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen: Why, how now, Hamlet?

Hamlet: What's the matter now?

Queen: Have you forgot me?

Hamlet: No, by the rood,¹ not so!

You are the

Queen, your husband's brother's wife,

And, would it were not so, you are my mother.

Queen: Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

Hamlet: Come, come, and sit you down. You shall not budge.

You go not till I set you up a glass²

Where you may see the inmost part of you!

¹ *rood*: cross

² *glass*: mirror

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Question 2. Show the significance of this exchange between Hamlet and Gertrude. Refer both to this passage and to elsewhere in the play.

Response:

- **This passage immediately follows Hamlet's avoidance of killing Claudius at prayer, and immediately precedes his rash murder of Polonius. Both events will have tragic consequences.**
- **Hamlet confronts his mother with the truth.**
- **Hamlet displays an emotion central to his motivation throughout the play: his utter disgust with his mother's actions.**
- **This passage immediately precedes a radical shift in the relationship between Hamlet and his mother. Though Gertrude here attempts to maintain a firm maternal authority, she will soon be reduced to remorseful submission by Hamlet's browbeating, leading to a reappearance of the ghost "to whet [Hamlet's] almost blunted purpose."**
- **From this point, Gertrude's loyalty appears to be to Hamlet, not Claudius.**
- **Appearance versus reality is a central theme of the play. In this passage, Hamlet drops his own mask of madness as he "set[s]...up a glass" to expose his mother's hidden sins.**

*Other responses are possible.*⁵⁵

Criteria: Content and clarity.

⁵⁵ Emphasis added.

APPENDIX G – Numerical Score Guide

SCORING GUIDE FOR SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

This is a first-draft response and should be scored as such.

6

The 6 response combines a detailed discussion of the topic with a perceptive understanding of the passage in the context of the play. The analysis includes pertinent references. The ideas are focused and clearly expressed. The response, however, need not be error-free.

5

The 5 response combines a detailed discussion of the topic with an accurate understanding of the passage in the context of the play. The analysis includes relevant references. The ideas are clearly and logically presented. The response, however, need not be error-free.

4

The 4 response contains a competent discussion of the topic and a general understanding of the passage. The references are mostly accurate, but may be limited. Ideas are presented in a straightforward manner. Errors may be present but are seldom distracting.

3

The 3 response contains a barely adequate discussion of the topic and a limited understanding of the passage. While present, references may be inappropriate or incorrect. The development of ideas is superficial or incomplete. Errors may be distracting.

2

The 2 response is inadequate. The discussion of the topic is inadequate or incomplete, and the understanding of the passage is flawed. References may be irrelevant or lacking. The response may lack organization and coherence. Errors may impede understanding.

1

The 1 response is unacceptable. It does not meet the purpose of the task or may be too brief to address the topic. References may be irrelevant, flawed, or lacking. Errors may render the paper unintelligible.

0

The zero response is a complete misunderstanding of the task, or is simply a restatement of the topic. Any zero response must be cleared by the section leader.

NR

A blank paper with no response given.