
Changes to the English Literature GCSE: a sociocultural perspective

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ABSTRACT Various sociological frameworks strongly suggest that recent changes to the English literature GCSE syllabus content will have a detrimental effect on those individuals who come from an environment with few sources of educationally exchangeable literary and linguistic cultural capital. In an attempt to provide a more sociological position from which to understand the situation, this article attempts to correlate a number of these frameworks, concluding that although more research would be necessary to reach a definitive conclusion, it is difficult to see how the recent GCSE changes will help (relatively speaking) those from an environment lacking in such capitals. It also suggests that perhaps a more vigorous system of policy surveillance is necessary if any future changes are to be properly and effectively addressed by the stakeholders in question.

Introduction

In May 2014, and after a period of over two years during which numerous government publications were drafted, written and eventually released for public consultation, Britain's four exam boards finally published the first draft of their 2015 English literature specifications.[1]

Although it took almost 10 months, when it was finally noticed that all non-British literature would be absent from the syllabus, over 30 newspaper articles were written within the space of only 7 days.[2] Since the publication of the exam boards' specifications, however, there is another significant change that seems to have been overlooked: the specifications of each of the United Kingdom's (UK) four exam boards indicate that the presence of modern literature in the new English literature GCSE has dropped by over 50%.[3]

After describing the process that led up to this situation, this article will then examine the GCSE change from a more sociological perspective, using the

theoretical frameworks of Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein as a means of analysis.

It should be noted that the focus of this article is on the language used in modern and pre-1917 literature, and the effects that an increase in various forms of language in the literature syllabus will have on individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds. The focus is not on the quality, socio-historical importance or inspirational potential of specific texts, but rather on the GCSE attainment, educational capital, and social mobility through educational equality that the changes will supposedly facilitate among various socio-economic groups; it is these three things that the Department for Education (DfE) seem so enthusiastic to encourage.[4] From a Bourdieuan perspective it is in the 'exchange value' of literature, rather than its 'use value', where any trends of social reproduction can be examined. Few people deny the phenomenal universality of Shakespeare, the wonderful imagination of Dickens, or the intrinsically transformative effects of poetry, but the debate over which individual texts should be included in the syllabus is a subjective one, whereas to examine the situation from a more sociological position might allow for an objective examination that has so far been absent from the debate.

A Deconstruction of the Reform

On 20 January 2011, the DfE published a call for evidence to 'all those interested in the National Curriculum'; this was the first step towards its full review and eventual reform. Michael Gove then appointed an advisory committee and a panel of experts to ensure that all decisions were evidence-based, with final proposals subject to a period of public consultation in 2012.[5]

In December 2011, *The Framework for the National Curriculum: a report by an expert panel for the curriculum review* was published. Structured around a substantive foundation of 'international best practices', including those of Finland, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and the USA (specifically Massachusetts), it is a highly detailed, 76 page document outlining the collective findings and recommendations of the panel.[6]

Although, at least publicly, a period of inaction followed this appointment, on June 8 2012, the DfE published 'Remit for Review for the National Curriculum in England', which seems to be the first written occasion in which Michael Gove expresses the reason for the review. The reason being that '[t]he Government set out in the Coalition Agreement its commitment to give schools greater freedom over the curriculum'.[7]

After a lengthy consultation with the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) [8], in which they pointed out the 'potential risks of reforming the qualifications market at the same time as fundamentally changing the qualifications themselves' [9], Gove nonetheless remained 'very concerned about the perverse incentives in the current system that have led to the "race to the bottom"', and felt persuaded by the urgent need for reform in

order to 'set expectations that match and exceed those in the highest performing jurisdictions', implying a second reason for the review.[10]

In June 2013, the *English Literature Subject Content and Assessment Objectives* were published, and, following another consultation, the final draft was released on November 1 2013. The document sets out the minimum requirements for all pupils as part of their English literature GCSE, starting in September 2015.[11]

Presently students are required to answer a mandatory question on modern texts, which comprises between 40% and 50% of the final grade, depending on the exam board, and a combination of poetry, Shakespeare and literary heritage, which makes up the remaining 50-60%.[12] The new minimum requirements set out by the DfE are as follows: at least one play by Shakespeare, at least one nineteenth century novel, a selection of poetry since 1789, including representative Romantic poetry, and at least one piece of fiction or drama from the British Isles from 1914 onwards.[13] Table I details the exam boards' present specifications and how they will look after the changes take place.

	AQA		OCR		EdEXCEL		WJEC	
	2015	2017	2015	2017	2015	2017	2015	2017
Modern texts (post-1917)	40%	20%	50%	25%	50%	25%	41%	20%
Literary heritage and poetry (pre-1917)	60%	80%	50%	75%	50%	75%	59%	80%

Table I. UK exam boards' proportion of pre-1917 and post-1917 texts in the GCSE English Literature Syllabus, before and after the change is implemented.

Although the press only became aware of the change on May 25 2014 [14], the emphasis was placed entirely on the absence of non-British texts. Michael Gove has been accused of 'dropping', 'banning', 'cutting' and 'axing' all non-British texts from the school curriculum.[15] In an article in *The Telegraph*, Michael Gove wrote that the DfE has not banned anything, and all they are doing is 'asking exam boards to broaden – not narrow – the books young people study for GCSE'.[16] Exam boards, he continues, 'have the freedom to design specifications so that they are stretching and interesting, and include any other number of texts from which teachers can choose'.[17] The DfE also published *English Literature GCSE: a mythbuster* [18], stating that the new GCSE will be 'broader and more challenging', and that the exam boards have the freedom to decide 'what literature to include, subject to the minimum requirements we set

out'.[19] GCSE specifications 'are only a starting point' and parents will 'expect their children to read more than four pieces of literature over two years of studying for their GCSEs'.[20] It then goes on to detail the inclusion of an unseen text, adding that pupils should 'read widely', as well as underlining the fact that 'seminal world literature' is a significant part of Key Stage 3 English literature requirements. The Key Stage 4 minimum requirements, it should be noted, state that an *entire* Shakespeare play and an *entire* nineteenth century novel must be studied, suggesting that the exam boards' 'freedoms' are somewhat limited in scope.[21]

The public reaction, which came 10 months after the first sign of the changes taking place, focused solely on the exclusion of non-British texts. That the unit comprising modern texts has been significantly reduced, and in some cases halved, seems to have gone unnoticed. It suggests that perhaps a greater amount of policy-surveillance in future would allow for something more substantial than the usual dichotomy, whereby the press react with what can be reasonably described as hysteria, the DfE offer a defence, and the matter is forgotten, as seems to have happened in this case.[22]

Given the subjective nature of the content of the English literature GCSE, and given the absence of any clear reason behind this significant adjustment to the curriculum, it seems that an objective examination and theoretical analysis of the situation would be a reasonable point of departure.

The DfE's Reasons for the Change

The DfE's official line is that they haven't banned anything and that the exam boards can include any books they wish.[23] Michael Gove has repeatedly said that the changes have 'broadened' the English literature syllabus, due mainly to the fact that in the previous system most pupils were studying *Of Mice and Men*. [24] Less than a week after *English Literature GCSE: a mythbuster* was released the exam boards published their English literature reading lists, which contain no literature written outside of the British Isles and a significant reduction in the weightings towards modern literature.[25] Although these changes have been overseen by Ofqual, clearly the DfE have had a significant influence on the weightings of the grades by stipulating the inclusion of 'whole texts', but that isn't to say there aren't any other parties involved in the making of these decisions. With the advice of their evidence base, in this case an expert panel [26], the government made a draft curriculum. This draft was then submitted to Ofqual, who offered advice and suggested adjustments, some of which were accepted. The final draft was then submitted to the exam boards and the first draft of the new specifications was written. The aim of this article isn't to find someone to blame, rather it is to underline an important aspect of the recent changes that may have been overlooked.

It appears that to make a GCSE more 'challenging', more 'stretching', more 'rigorous' and more focused towards the UK's literary heritage and pre-nineteenth century literature, without at any point making a single mention of

the socio-economic milieu of the learners themselves, suggests that perhaps the sociological perspective has been overlooked (with the exception of Elizabeth Truss's article in *The Guardian*, in which she writes, '[t]hese changes are vital for all pupils, but they are most important for those who may come from homes where there may not be books, or parents that read to you, and who need a curriculum rich in the classics' [27], but just why these individuals need a curriculum rich in the classics, and how this might benefit them, is not explained).

Educationally Exchangeable Capitals

Few people deny the stratified nature of society. There exist various cultural, social and economic divisions between us, and how and why these divisions exist and perpetuate themselves is one of the most complex and debated areas of sociology. To understand if a specific division is growing, shrinking or remaining the same, and which way both sides are moving, is an incredibly complex undertaking.

Traditionally, of course, the stratification of society was thought to exist in the Marxist dichotomy of working-class and non-working-class, or labour and capital.[28] We are now living in a post-traditional, postmodern society [29], and if we are to use the results of the Great British Class Survey [30], which uses a framework of understanding theorised by Pierre Bourdieu, there are now thought to be seven socio-economic tiers to society with each group's position dependent on their accumulation of economic capital and exchangeable social and cultural capital. The group at the lowest end in terms of all forms of capital are defined as 'precarious proletariats' and make up 15% of the UK population. Second to this group in terms of capital 'deprivation' are the 'traditional working class', who have slightly more economic capital, but similar types of cultural and social capital. These two groups will be the focus of this study.

Cultural capital, the central part of a theoretical framework created by Pierre Bourdieu [31], defines the cultural knowledge that individuals inherit from their environment and tacitly exploit in symbolic exchange for more advantageous positioning in society – sometimes it is completely redundant, sometimes it is fully exchangeable, but it is always clandestine and unregulated. This article sets out to ask a number of questions in order to re-establish cultural capital as central to the English literature debate: Are any forms of cultural capital exchangeable in the education system? If so, how does this exchange take place? Who possesses these forms of cultural capital and what is to be gained by possessing them? And finally, where and in what manner is English literature situated in this debate?

As Bourdieu repeatedly reminds us, cultural capital is, in essence, an analytical tool, a symbolic representation of a network of empirical sociological phenomena. It is not about value, but about *perceived* value. It can be contradictory and can be said to exist in something of a dialectical state, simultaneously being determined by that which it determines.[32] This

reciprocal determination is central to Bourdieu's theoretical framework; a continuity of, in the case of education, social immobility, it '[a]rises in contexts which need to be seen as dynamic social spaces where issues of power are always at stake'.[33]

One of the most prominent of these contexts is the classroom. It should be noted that a regularity is not a rule, exceptions always occur, and although the qualitative analysis of contradicting idiosyncrasies can be illuminating, it is in the patterns that emerge when groups of individuals are examined in relation to the field, past and present, that seems most pertinent to this debate (in this case the classroom, the schoolyard, and most importantly the family environment), and only by doing this can we begin to understand how the different capital configurations resonate with the logic of the field.[34]

Cultural capital, according to Bourdieu, exists in three states: the embodied state (reflecting long lasting dispositions of the mind and body), the objectified state (in the form of material cultural goods), and the institutionalised state (in the form of education). Each of these forms of capital can be given a negative or a positive value dependent on their proximity from the demands of the scholastic market.[35] Although educational capital succinctly exemplifies capital in its most simplified form, it would be beyond the scope of this article to veer too far from the subject matter, bound as it is within a specific sociocultural and educational milieu. Literature, on the other hand, specifically poetry and pre-nineteenth century works from the English literary canon, can clearly be defined as powerful and epitomical examples of objectified cultural capital.[36]

In *Bourdieu and Education* [37], Diane Reay conducted a Bourdieuean analysis of cultural capital at work in the school environment, identifying five main types of embodied cultural signifiers: information about the education system, use of language, social confidence, educational knowledge, and the extent to which entitlement, assertiveness, aggression or timidity characterised parents' approaches to teaching staff. She also identifies a number of objectified and institutionalised forms of cultural capital: material resources, available time, and educational qualifications. Each of these traits provides the individual with educational advantage, they are more recurrent within families defined by the aforementioned class survey as possessing large amounts of all types of exchangeable capital, and each signifier is, to a varying degree, inherited from generation to generation. Of the questions suggested in the earlier part of this article, a few possible answers seem to be emerging.

It would be wise to remind ourselves of what we are examining. We are not simply examining whether or not being middle-class and employing the above cultural signifiers within the education system is advantageous to a child's English literature attainment, but rather we are doing so whilst keeping in mind the recent GCSE change and asking: which of the two syllabi would be most advantageous to those coming from an environment lacking in educationally exchangeable cultural capital? To Bourdieu the answer is relatively straightforward, the literature classroom is, he writes, 'the ideal place to study

the action of cultural factors on inequality in the school'.[38] This, however, by no means closes the argument. Bourdieu is writing of 1970s Paris, and as will be suggested later, it would be necessary to conduct a large amount of research within the specific field in question in order to pull ourselves closer to a more definitive conclusion.

When a change to the curriculum occurs, in terms of equality of opportunity, a primary question is: What happens to the attainment gap between socio-economic groups? In the case of this debate: what will happen to the attainment gap when the modern literature part of the syllabus is significantly reduced and replaced by Shakespeare, pre-nineteenth century literature and 300 lines of poetry? There are three possibilities: the socio-economic groups move at a relative pace and the gap between them remains the same, the groups with more exchangeable literary and linguistic capital move quicker and the gap widens, or lastly, the groups with less exchangeable literary and linguistic capital move quicker and the gap decreases. In the DfE's *Equalities Impact Assessment* [39], published in July 2013, there is no mention of the impact that the changes may have on individuals from different socio-economic groups, and although a number of respondents voiced their concerns for the impact the changes will have on low-attaining pupils, there is no mention of the potential mobility shifts that might occur. There is also certainly no solid quantitative evidence suggesting that increasing this kind of literature will benefit those from environments lacking in literary cultural capital, at least in relation to the other groups involved.

It seems that the next reasonable point of departure would be an examination of the language codes at work within the different socio-economic groups in question, and within the content of the literature itself.

Bourdieu's notion of habitus can also be used to describe his understanding of language. Habitus is a set of unconscious bodily dispositions used to operate within the field of capital exchange. One of the ways in which it can operate is in the form of linguistic habitus.[40] As with all types of habitus, linguistic habitus can set various limits and create advantages for those who possess it, depending on which form is employed. Endlessly and tacitly reproduced, the transformation of linguistic habitus takes great effort and a form of knowledge usually unavailable to those who haven't directly inherited it. Such practices become normalised and constant, cemented into the group disposition of the field over time. As Steven May writes of the language market, individual choice is neither unconstrained or neutral, '[i]t is at best a "forced choice", propelled by wider forces of social, political, economic and *linguistic* inequality and discrimination'.[41] Cheryl Hardy neatly summarises:

Pupils acquire *cultural capital*, which in this case is called linguistic competence, through the legitimisation of their language practices by the adults they encounter – their teachers and family. Where the linguistic practices of the family match the language use promoted in the school, children acquire *linguistic capital* which matches that of the most dominant in society – those who occupy positions in the

field of power ... The language practices of the family do not always match the language practices endorsed by the school on behalf of the State ... Bourdieu writes that, for many children from less-educated families, 'The world of the classroom, where 'polished' language is used, contrasts with the world of the family' (Bourdieu et al 1994/1965:9). These children, faced with conflicting linguistic practices at home and in school, have the double task of acquiring language appropriate for two markedly different field contexts.[42]

Using Basil Bernstein's theory of restricted and elaborated language codes, it is possible to bring focus to the language itself. Bernstein spent many years analysing the linguistic traits within various socio-economic class fields and also came under heavy criticism for purportedly suggesting that there was some kind of a deficit in the language codes of various social classes, or even that they implied an inferior intelligence.[43] Most of the time Bernstein writes about language codes he includes a well-practiced defence of this accusation, reminding the reader that the code theory 'accepts neither a deficit or difference position but draws attention to the relations between macro power relations and micro practices of transmission, acquisition and evaluation and the positioning and oppositioning to which these practices give rise'.[44] It seems quite clear that Bernstein's primary intention was to establish a comprehensible representation of a specific sociological occurrence, in this case the various rates of linguistic exchange that take place in the classroom; this is not about whether or not one way of communicating is better than another, it is about how much tacit value each is accorded by the educational establishment.

Either way, as a method of understanding whether or not the presence of different forms of literature in the GCSE syllabus has any kind of relationship to educational equality, Bernstein's elaborated and restricted linguistic codes are invaluable.

For those who speak in restricted code:

speech does not become the object of special perceptual activity, neither does a theoretical attitude develop towards the structural possibilities of the organisation. The speech is epitomised by a low-level and limiting syntactic organisation and there is little motivation or orientation towards increasing vocabulary ... the conditions of learning and the dimensions of relevance initiated and sustained through a restricted code are radically different from the learning induced through an elaborated code.[45]

Those socio-economic groups lacking in exchangeable capitals, the precarious proletariat and the traditional working-classes, tend to operate, according to Bernstein, within a linguistic framework limited almost completely to restricted codes. The traits that characterise elaborated code are in stark contrast to those which characterise restricted code: 'the condition of the listener will not be taken for granted' [46], it encourages 'the individual to select from his [*sic*]

linguistic resources a verbal arrangement which closely fits specific referents' [47] and the 'preparation and delivery of very *explicit* meaning is the major purpose of the code'.[48] Much research has been conducted around this framework.[49] As Bernstein further explains, '[w]here the child is sensitive to an elaborated code the school experience is one of symbolic and social *development*; for the child limited to a restricted code the school experience is one of symbolic and social *change*'.[50] Central to this debate is the difference between 'development' and 'change', and it seems that this difference is similar to the one between Jean Piaget's representations of how we understand new knowledge, termed 'assimilation' and 'accommodation'. To assimilate is to make associations with pre-existing units of knowledge, or schemas, and to accommodate is to construct new schemas. Constructing new schemas takes longer, takes more effort, and leaves the individual vulnerable to disengagement.[51] If half a classroom is assimilating the language involved in English literature, and the other half is accommodating it, it's clear to see how what Bernstein calls the 'alienating tendencies' of educational institutions might become intensified.

Elaborated code is primarily about depth and precision, and Bernstein uses it to explain that problems arise when 'contexts carry meanings very much removed from the [working-class] child's cultural experience'.[52] Three other things that are constructed within a framework of elaborated code, and which also contain innumerable meanings and contexts 'very much removed from the [working-class] child's cultural experience' are nineteenth century novels, the plays of William Shakespeare and the analysis of poetry. One has only to take a glance inside any of the nineteenth century novels on the exam boards' reading lists to see just how elaborated the writing actually is, and as for Shakespeare, clearly those with a wider range of vocabulary, an all round more elaborated code, a greater wealth of linguistic habitus, and a better inherent understanding of the sophisticated syntax of the seventeenth century (i.e. those who might have visited the theatre), will inevitably do better at the exams and achieve better grades. The modern reading list of the new specifications, in contrast, contains books such as *Anita and Me*, *Animal Farm* and *A Taste of Honey* (not to mention *Pigeon English*).[53] Although it would be difficult to categorise the language of these books as restricted, they would certainly be in a more central position on a restricted/elaborated spectrum; at this point it should be repeated, this is not about inspiring pupils to develop a passion for literature or even to become lifelong learners, it is about educational capital, increasing social mobility through educational equality, and obtaining the qualifications that will remain with them for their entire careers; it is these three things that the present government claim are central to their strategy. If Bernstein's codes are accurate it strongly suggests that further saturating education with an elaborated code of communication, be it speaking, reading or writing, will almost certainly have a detrimental effect on the gap that presently exists between the various strata of society.

There is, however, potentially a very simple way to contradict this assertion. If an individual comes from an environment saturated in restricted code, would it not be beneficial to expose them to a greater degree of elaborated code, in order to provide some linguistic equality?

Although this seems like a relatively obvious argument, it is difficult to see how this would provide linguistic equality. Those already capable of communicating in an elaborated code would surely achieve higher attainment than those without such capabilities. Going back to the behaviour of the gap between socio-economic groups, although those lacking in elaborated code might become more linguistically accomplished in the school setting, they would still lose ground to their more capital-rich peers, which would in turn perpetuate the divide and further cement the field of social reproduction.

There are many other pieces of research encompassing many other approaches and disciplines that support this view. In *The Meaning Makers* [54], Gordon Wells offers a convincing argument that it is through story-telling that children develop the tools to make meaning of the world around them, but he also writes of the children who come to school without the means to do so. Due to their home environment they 'lack familiarity with the way in which stories are constructed and given expression in writing'. [55] John Yandell [56], in *The Social Construction of Meaning*, speaks of the ways in which a lack of linguistic cultural capital, in this case a 'single lexical item' in an exam question [57], can make an entire text inaccessible. Much of the book is concerned with 'approaches to teaching and learning that fail to take sufficient account of the subjectivities of the learner, that fail, therefore, to conceptualise teaching and learning as relational, socioculturally situated practices'. [58] In 'Childrens' Personal Learning Agendas at Home' [60], a study on the home learning of low achieving 8-10 year olds, Mandy Maddock illustrates the sheer value of *all* aspects of learning that a child is exposed to in the home environment, irrespective of class, wealth, ethnicity, etc., suggesting perhaps the unexchangeability of a variety of highly valuable and engaging learning experiences.

The Possibility of Future Research

Pierre Bourdieu conducted much of his research in France and Algeria between 1950 and 1990 and Basil Bernstein was also of a different period, so clearly it would be necessary to conduct a large amount of more current quantitative research in order to add definitive support to this argument. If a large number of GCSE students studying for the present English literature GCSE were to be positioned according to their cultural and socio-economic status, these figures could be correlated with their grades, which would then have to be compared with a similar set of data collected from those completing the English literature exam in 2017, after the changes have been implemented. Although this could be carried out quite conveniently using the data of those receiving free school

meals, this would possibly be too broad a determinant for gauging the social and cultural capital configurations of the groups in question.

Conclusion

Before the 'use value' of the literature in question can be addressed, i.e. before the debate over which single works of literature should be studied takes place, the 'exchange value' needs to be, if not rectified, then at least acknowledged and quantitatively understood.

Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein, among others, suggest emphatically that individuals employ in the classroom the tacit knowledge and habits they have inherited from their home environment. This applies to learning strategy, speaking, reading and writing, among others. The more conducive the influences bestowed onto the learner by their home environment are to the content of the curriculum and the methods of assessment in a school, the greater the positive effect these influences will have on a learner's attainment. Due to the nature of the material in question, in this case nineteenth-century literature, Shakespeare and poetry, evidence suggests that this effect will be exacerbated by the recent changes to the English literature syllabus, thus widening the gap between those from environments rich in exchangeable literary and linguistic capital, and those from environments lacking in exchangeable literary and linguistic capital.

Although it is difficult to deny that much of Bourdieu's approach displays a relatively deterministic outlook, clearly it is a determinism dictated by the very fabric of the society in which it takes place. To understand Bourdieu is to understand that a shift in the paradigm of determination is necessary if a society is to move towards educational equality. To disregard the relative nature of the behaviour of the gap between socio-economic groups seems itself a form of determination. If one group is to 'keep up', before even attempting to 'catch up', it needs to be given the means to do so, and although there will be scope for a significant amount of practical research in 2017, evidence does suggest that the recent changes in the English literature GCSE syllabus will have a detrimental effect on the attainment of those with the least amount of exchangeable capitals at their disposal.

Finally, and perhaps most pertinently, there seems to be a distinct lack of policy surveillance occurring within the educational establishment. Every year dozens, perhaps hundreds of articles, blogs, web pages and journal articles (like this one) are written by teachers, educationalists, lecturers, professors, journalists and students (like this one), concerning the state of education in the UK, yet the actual source of much of this material is left mostly to cement itself deep within the system, as was the case with both the exclusion of non-British texts and the reduction of modern literature in the GCSE syllabus. Perhaps if any immediate changes are to be made, this would be a good place to start.

Notes

- [1] AQA (2014) GCSE English Literature Draft Specification. <http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/specifications/AQA-8702-SP-2015.PDF> (accessed July 8, 2014); OCR (2014) Level 1/2 GCSE (1-9) in English Literature J352. <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/168995-specification-draft-gcse-english-literature-j352.pdf> (accessed July 8, 2014); Edexcel. (2014) Pearson Edexcel Level 1/ Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in English Literature (1ETO). <http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCSE%20from%202015/PearsonEdexcel-GCSE-EnglishLiterature-DraftSpec-June14.pdf> (accessed July 8, 2014); WJEC (2014) Educas GCSE (9-1) in English Literature. <http://eduqas.co.uk/docs/wjec-eduqas-gcse-english-literature-specification.pdf> (accessed July 8, 2014).
- [2] See *The Times*, *The Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph* between May 25 and June 3, 2014.
- [3] See note 1.
- [4] M. Gove (2013). Keynote address presented at the Social Market Foundation, February 5, London.
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- [8] M. Gove (2013) Letter to Ofqual: Ofqual Policy Steer Letter: reforming Key Stage 4 qualifications. London: Department for Education.
- [9] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- [10] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- [11] Department for Education (DfE) (2013) *English Literature Subject Content and Assessment Objectives*. London: DfE.
- [12] See note 1.
- [13] See note 11.
- [14] S. Griffiths (2014) Gove Kills the Mockingbird with Ban on US Novels, *Sunday Times*, May 25. www.thesundaytimes.co.uk
- [15] See *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *The Telegraph* between May 25 and June 7, 2014.
- [16] M. Gove (2014) Kill a Mockingbird? I'd Never Dream of It, *The Telegraph*, May 26. www.telegraph.co.uk

- [17] Ibid.
- [18] Department for Education (DfE) (2014) *English Literature GCSE: a mythbuster*. London: Department for Education.
- [19] Ibid., p. 1.
- [20] Ibid., p. 2.
- [21] See note 13.
- [22] After 7 June, the story seems to have been abandoned by the newspapers.
- [23] See note 16 and note 18.
- [24] Ibid.
- [25] See note 1.
- [26] Professor Mary James, Tim Oates, Professor Andrew Pollard and Professor Dylan Williams.
- [27] E. Truss (2014) No, We Have Not Banned To Kill a Mockingbird, *The Guardian*, May 30. www.theguardian.com
- [28] K. Marx (2010) *Das Kapital*. Washington: Regnery Publishing.
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- [35] See note 31.
- [36] J.R.W. Speller (2011) *Bourdieu and Literature*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.
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- [41] Ibid., p.165, original emphasis.
- [42] Ibid., p.172, original emphasis.
- [43] A.R. Sadvovnik (1995) *Knowledge & Power: the sociology of Basil Bernstein*, p. 133. New Jersey: Ablex.
- [44] Ibid., p. 18.

- [45] B. Bernstein (1971) *Class, Codes and Control*, p. 157. St Albans: Paladin.
- [46] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- [47] *Ibid.*, p. 94.
- [48] *Ibid.*, original emphasis.
- [49] For one concise example see: R. Hasan (1986) The Ontogenesis of Ideology: an interpretation of mother–child talk, in T. Threadgold, E.A. Grosz, G.R. Kress, & M.A.K. Halliday (Eds) *Semiotics, Ideology, Language*. Sydney: Sydney Association for Studies in Society and Culture.
- [50] *Ibid.*, p. 160, emphasis has been added.
- [51] J. Piaget (1995) *Sociological Studies*, ed. L. Smith. London: Routledge.
- [52] B. Bernstein (1971) *Class, Codes and Control*, p. 204. St Albans: Paladin.
- [53] See note 1.
- [54] G. Wells (2009) *The Meaning Makers*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- [55] *Ibid.*, p. 202.
- [56] J. Yandell (2013) *The Social Construction of Meaning*. London: Routledge.
- [57] *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- [58] G. Yandell (2014) *The Social Construction of Meaning*, p. 93. Abingdon: Routledge. See also the theoretical framework of Lev Vygotsky.
- [59] M. Maddock (2006) Childrens' Personal Learning Agendas at Home, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 36(2), 153-169.

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