Critical Thinking and English Literature in Higher Education: The Theoretical Models and the Swedish Syllabi

Iulian Cananau, University of Gävle

Abstract
Critical thinking is an ever-growing interdisciplinary field of research. This paper introduces key aspects of the vast scholarship on critical thinking in higher education to the academic community of English literary studies in Sweden. Its aim is to provide a sound framework for research-based discussions of the potential for critical thinking in literature courses. To achieve this goal, the paper first presents a synopsis of the main theoretical models of critical thinking in higher education: as cognitive-argumentative skills, as cognitive-argumentative skills and psychosocial dispositions, as resistance to oppression, and as a crucial step toward critical acting and being. These models and approaches are then used to identify the conceptions of critical thinking that inform the learning objectives in undergraduate-level English literature syllabi in Sweden. The study finds that the cognitive-argumentative-skills approach dominates the conceptualization of critical thinking in English literature syllabi, but the other three models are also present in various degrees. The article ends with a call for a systematic discussion of the curricular and teaching practices that cultivate critical thinking in English literary studies.

Keywords: critical thinking, literary studies, English literature, higher education, Swedish syllabi.

There is no Frigate like a Book
To take us Lands away
Nor any Coursers like a Page
Of prancing Poetry –
(Emily Dickinson)

1. Introduction

Critical thinking has been defined as a set of skills, a disposition, an intellectual or even a civic virtue, and various combinations thereof. It has

Cananau, Iulian. 2021. 'Critical Thinking and English Literature in Higher Education: The Theoretical Models and the Swedish Syllabi.' *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 20(2): 99–128.

been approached with a focus on the individual and, alternatively, from a socio-cultural perspective, with a focus on action and one's responsibilities to the world beyond the self. The only consensus, typically reflected in curricular documents, is that critical thinking is something to strive for in education at all levels. In his contribution to *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Thinking* (2015), Peter Ellerton makes use of figurative language and literary knowledge to capture both the ubiquity in spirit and the elusiveness in substance of critical thinking in school and university syllabi. According to him, critical thinking 'has become the Cheshire Cat of curricula, in that it seems to be in all places, owned by all disciplines, but it does not appear, fully developed, in any of these' (2015: 409). It sounds like an apt metaphor for critical thinking from the vantage point of curriculum studies, but it becomes problematic if the concept is approached from the point of view of an individual discipline and its pedagogy. One might not be able to discern the Cat in the foliage of disciplinary content and learning objectives or might not even realize it is there at all, grinning or otherwise. Furthermore, Ellerton's analogy implies that at least there is a notion of critical thinking, which, given the right conditions, might be conjured up in its totality, and recognized as critical thinking by everyone. In reality, there is no universally accepted definition. Critical thinking is, nevertheless, an established and dynamic field of research with movements, camps, trends, and debates. Many universities (especially in English speaking countries) offer courses in critical thinking at undergraduate and graduate levels.

While critical thinking as a field of research is well-established in general pedagogy and curriculum studies, and its presence in specific subject areas is increasing, it has so far received little attention from scholars interested in the teaching of literature in universities. But it might be high time literary-studies academics took a closer look at this area of research. In the era of 'fake news' and 'alternative truths', citizens' ability to read and think critically might prove vital for democracy. Moreover, literature has a special relation with truth. It often reveals that there are many ways of conceiving it, that indeed there is no absolute truth. Yet there are, in literature, notions of truth like that of the slave narratives and all of the so-called protest literature, which resist relativization. In a sense, much of the work and expertise of literary scholars is to distinguish between claims to truth and to advance one claim against others through persuasive and valid arguments. To do that, they employ an ability to think

critically that they have developed and trained as part of their professional identity.

As a contribution to this special *NJES* issue, this paper introduces key aspects of the vast scholarship on critical thinking in higher education to the academic community of English literary studies in Sweden. Its aim is to provide a sound framework for research-based discussions of the potential for critical thinking in literature courses. To achieve this goal, I first present a synopsis of the main theoretical models of critical thinking in higher education. These models and approaches will then be used to identify the conceptions of critical thinking that inform the learning objectives in undergraduate-level English literature syllabi in Sweden.

Before presenting the various notions of critical thinking, it is worth explaining why it is considered necessary in higher education. Critical thinking might well be 'all the rage in current academic pedagogy' (Mulnix 2012: 464), but, according to its many advocates, it has some good reasons to be. It is, first, a highly desirable personal quality, 'a life skill and an asset to the future workforce' (Huber & Kuncel 2016: 431). It can be found in EU higher education policy documents, where it features alongside high-level digital competences, numeracy, and problem-solving as a 'crucial attribute' for students irrespective of discipline (European Commission 2017). In more concrete terms, critical thinking is considered an antidote to irrationality, subjectivity, a 'make-sense epistemology' and the relativistic view of judgment as a matter of 'individual idiosyncrasies' (Kurfiss 1988), all of them uncritical dispositions found to be rampant among US college students in the 1970s and 1980s. According to Davies and Barnett (2015), the concern that in the context of mass higher education students are insufficiently developing their critical thinking abilities is ongoing (1). In the influential Delphi Report to which I will return later, Facione (1990) wrote that, as a tool of inquiry, critical thinking is 'a liberating force in education and a powerful resource in one's personal and civic life' (3). The importance of critical thinking for democratic life and the formation of good citizens—understood as critical citizens—is often emphasized in the research literature (Siegel 1988; Barnett 1997; Brodin 2007; Stenbock-Hult 2017). Not necessarily connected with this civic dimension, critical thinking is also associated with an educational ideal to form and train ethical thinkers (Barnett 1997; Paul & Elder 2009; Bohlin 2014). Finally, and most dramatically, critical

thinking has even been described as necessary for personal survival (Brookfield 2012).

2. Approaches to critical thinking

2.1 Critical thinking as cognitive-argumentative skills

Although certain manifestations of the phenomenon and practice of critical thinking in philosophy can be traced back to pre-Socratic times (Brodin 2007), education scientists usually consider Dewey's concept of reflective thinking as the first contribution to modern research in critical thinking (Kurfiss 1988). Dewey (1910) defined reflective thinking as 'active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends' (1910: 6). Thinking critically according to this definition can be said to be a matter of deciding the truth value of beliefs and ideas by checking their premises and reflecting over their consequences. This aptitude is universal, according to Dewey, and can be attained and trained through progressive education.

Separating truth from falsity, identifying fallacious arguments and wrong assumptions, and distinguishing between reliable and unreliable information are still regarded by many as the central goals of teaching critical thinking in higher education. This is actually the oldest approach to critical thinking in higher education, sometimes generically called *critical thinking as cognitive (argumentation) skills* (Davis 2015). According to the simplest formulation, critical thinking means 'correct assessment of statements' (Ennis 1962: 8). A more elaborate definition in the same vein, identifies it as 'an investigation whose purpose is to explore a situation, phenomenon, question, or problem to arrive at a hypothesis or conclusion about it that integrates all available information and that can therefore be convincingly justified' (Kurfiss 1988: 2). As one may observe, this definition effectively integrates Dewey's reflective thinking ideal into the narrower but more palpable objective of producing logically sound arguments. Another example comes from the Delphi Report mentioned earlier; this document was the result of the collaborative efforts of forty-six experts invited by the American Philosophical Association to elaborate a definitive account of the concept. In that document, critical thinking is understood to be 'purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological,

or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based' (Facione 1990: 3). The report also identifies a set of dispositions that distinguish the ideal critical thinker, but more on that later. More recently, the meaning of critical thinking has once again been distilled to its simplest form as a skill of logical reasoning. According to Jennifer Wilson Mulnix, it 'fundamentally consists in acquiring, developing, and exercising the skill of being able to grasp inferential connections holding between statements' (2012: 464–465). As she points out in her subsequent examination of the literature on teaching critical thinking skills, developing them in students depends on cultivating their metacognitive awareness of the thought process itself (2012: 474).

To sum up, all of the definitions above share a focus on logic, rationality, argumentation, and information evaluation. One might also notice that they incorporate the so-called higher-order thinking skills in Bloom's famous taxonomy, namely analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Ennis 1985; Davies 2015). This understanding of *critical thinking as cognitive skills* is also the most widespread among Swedish teachers, researchers, and curriculum developers (see Sporrong & Westin Tikkanen 2016; Eriksson 2018). Moreover, one of the competences and skills for the Degree of Bachelor in Annex 2 to the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (2020) is to 'demonstrate the ability to search for, gather, evaluate and critically interpret the relevant information for a formulated problem and also discuss phenomena, issues and situations critically'.[1] This curricular objective reflects the classical view of critical thinking in Swedish education science as a key value of a kind of higher education (inspired by the Humboldtian ideal) whose main goal is knowing 'how to think'. As we will see, virtually all the English course syllabi offered by Swedish colleges and universities account for this perspective in the learning objectives that pertain to their literature modules. Yet this conception of critical thinking *as cognitive or argumentation skills* competes with other theories and models of critical thinking available in the research literature. Mulnix's definition seems to be a pure expression of this first conception, as she virtually equates critical thinking with skills in logical reasoning, but as soon as she or any other theorist includes 'metacognition' or 'self-reflection' in her model, she has opened the door

[1] Translation by the Swedish Council for Higher Education; all subsequent quotations are from this English version.

to a broader conception of critical thinking that is more observant of its psychosocial dimension. Enter the cognitive-skills-and-disposition approach.

2.2 Critical thinking as cognitive-argumentative skills and dispositions

Some of the proponents of this approach are careful to separate skills from dispositions (Ennis 1985; Facione 1990; Halonen 1995) while others adopt a more integrative view (Siegel 1988; Paul 1993; Paul & Elder 2001). All of them acknowledge the importance of teaching cognitive and argumentation skills to which they add a focus on propensity elements such as attitudes, personal conduct, character traits, moral values, and/or emotions. Here is a summary of the dispositions usually identified in the research literature:[2]

- a desire to seek reasons (Ennis 1985), rely on reasons (Facione 1990; Paul 1993) and 'be moved' by them (Siegel 1988),
- inquisitiveness (Facione 1990),
- a desire to be well-informed (Ennis 1985; Facione 1990),
- flexibility, willingness to reconsider (Facione 1990), and metacognition,[3] i.e. 'scrutiny given to the process, the product, and the changes in the thinker that result from critical-thinking activities' (Halonen 1995: 78),
- open-mindedness (Ennis 1985; Facione 1990),
- fair-mindedness (Facione 1990; Paul 1993),
- sensitivity to the others' 'feelings, level of knowledge and degree of sophistication' (Ennis 1985: 46),
- tentativeness, skepticism, tolerance of ambiguity, appreciation of individual differences, and high regard for ethical practices (Halonen 1995),
- intellectual humility, intellectual courage, integrity, empathy, perseverance, and leading an 'examined life' (Paul 1993),

[2] My list of critical thinking dispositions is loosely based on Davies' review of that literature (2015).

[3] As Mulnix (2012) suggests, metacognition is actually a habituated cognitive skill that may become second nature or a propensity, as Halonen calls it.

- negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, confusion, and resistance; positive emotions such as joy, release, relief, and exhilaration (Brookfield 1987).

Some of these dispositions clearly overlap, and one may even wonder about the degree of synonymy between them. For example, it is difficult to distinguish open-mindedness from fair-mindedness even if one author further explains the former as the disposition to 'consider seriously other points of view than one's own' and to 'reason from premises with which one disagrees without letting the disagreement interfere with one's reasoning' (Ennis 1985: 46). Furthermore, this understanding of open-mindedness is even harder to distinguish from 'tolerance of ambiguity' and 'appreciation of individual differences'. There is however a common denominator in the approach to *critical thinking as both cognitive skills and dispositions*, namely its attention to the psychological, ethical, and sociocultural aspects of critical thinking. The sociocultural dimension is present in this approach because many of these dispositions arise from the individual's relation to others and to the world. Thinking critically about it, however, one might conclude that more attention to institutional contexts and social relations is required. Furthermore, one may still question the standards and practices of critical thinking and its underlying concept of rationality as Western and/or gender biased (Burbules & Berk 1999). Ultimately, what is missing from this approach is a clear explanation of how action takes place as a result of these skills and dispositions; proponents of this approach could be criticized for the unproblematic way in which they assume a correlation between thinking and doing. Yet higher education should provide us with a basis upon which to live and act in the world as practical beings and not merely as reflective beings (Davies 2015). In other words, it is not enough to 'simply' possess those skills and dispositions that are necessary to think and behave like a critical thinker; one should also act critically by engaging with social and political issues with an aim to redress a wrong or unfair situation, decision, law, norm, or behavior.

2.3 Critical pedagogy

Because of their shared focus on cognitive and argumentation skills, the first two approaches are often taken together and referred to as the critical thinking tradition or movement in higher education pedagogy. A radical

alternative to this tradition is *critical pedagogy*. What it shares with the previous approaches is the belief that students are deficient in those skills and dispositions that allow them to detect certain kinds of falsehoods, distortions, and inaccuracies, and that by helping learners think more critically, teachers will liberate their minds, allowing them to see the world as it 'really' is and act accordingly (Burbules & Berk 1999). However, this is where the similarities end. In *critical pedagogy*, the projected emancipation of the individual critical thinker is closely linked to social emancipation. Inspired by Gramsci and the Frankfurt School, *critical pedagogy* in higher education focuses on social and ideological critique. Its fundamental concepts are ideology, hegemony, power, and literacy. In this view, citizens in a capitalist system should know their place in society and accept this as a 'natural' normal fact, social injustice and inequality of power included. The education system contributes decisively to this normalization, for example, through its focus on, and rhetoric of, meritocracy, through testing, through maintaining separate curricula at upper secondary levels, some preparing students for higher education, others offering vocational training. In the words of one of its main advocates, 'critical pedagogy emphasizes the diverse conditions under which authority, knowledge, values, and subject positions are produced and interact within unequal relations of power' (Giroux 2001: 23). Awareness of oppressive norms and hegemonic practices is a fundamental learning objective in critical pedagogy, linked to Paulo Freire's key notion of *conscientização*, which means not only learning to perceive the said norms and practices, but also to take action against them (Freire 2000). To reform the thinkers' habits of thought is not enough; the institutions, ideologies and relations that create and maintain distorted and oppressed thinking must be challenged and transformed, too (Burbules & Berk 1999). While this kind of transformation can be considered the educational ideal of critical pedagogy, in the classroom, critical pedagogues teach resistance to oppression by means of action against educational indoctrination (Davies 2015).

Making students aware of the ideological underpinnings of disciplinary knowledge (including such knowledge that makes the object of literary studies in English courses) and encouraging them to interrogate the sociocultural norms that define identity are also the staple aims of critical pedagogy in Swedish higher education. Originating from gender and queer studies, a variety of critical pedagogy called *norm-critical*

pedagogy (Kalonaityté 2014) appears to have gained significant ground in the English literature syllabi.

2.4 Criticality

Neither the critical thinking tradition nor critical pedagogy have escaped criticism, most notably from feminists, who have accused them of perpetuating the exclusion of women's voices and experiences from their conceptions of rationality (Thayer-Bacon 1998). However, much of the criticism against the two 'schools' of critical thinking has come from each other. Inasmuch as the critical thinking tradition must be questioned from the standpoint of social accountability, critical pedagogy must be questioned from the standpoint of critical thinking about the validity of its own premises and assumptions, for example the ideological nature of its presuppositions and the assumption that the teacher always advocates the correct critical position.[4] In an influential essay, Burbules and Berk propose an alternative to the two 'schools' of critical thinking, one that integrates their core issues but avoids some of their more problematic claims and practices. Their solution is *criticality* as a practice, which means to think anew, to think differently, 'outside a framework of conventional understandings' (1999: 59). This means an openness to and comfort with thinking critically amidst alternatives that have equally strong claims. The tension between conflicting views must be seen as valuable. This openness does not mean embracing relativism, but rather an appreciation of the 'fecundity and variety' of the multiplicity of interpretations (1999: 60).[5] *Criticality* is a way of being (not only a way of thinking), a relation to others, not just an individual intellectual ability. *Criticality* is a mark of who we are and what we do, not only how we think.

Ronald Barnett is the scholar whose name is most frequently associated with the *criticality* movement. Like Burbules and Beck, he has called for more attention to critical being in developing curricula for critical thinking. In his study *Higher Education: A Critical Business* (1997), he identified three dimensions of criticality corresponding to three domains of critical thinking:

---

[4] For a detailed contrastive analysis of critical pedagogy and the critical thinking movement, see Burbules and Beck 1999 and Davies 2015.

[5] For an anti-relativist argument about perspective-dependence in critical thinking see Bohlin 2009.

- Critical reason (evaluate logical propositions; thinking) / (formal) Knowledge
- Critical reflection (evaluate and critique oneself and the discipline; reflecting) / Self
- Critical action (taking up a stance in the world; acting) / World.

According to Barnett, only the first one was consistently pursued in higher education. The second dimension has arguably been developing since the publication of Barnett's book, with learning objectives pertaining to self-reflection and metacognition slowly making their way into the university curricula; but critical action still seems to lie beyond the scope of higher education. For the advocates of the criticality movement, individuals taking action demonstrate 'a socio-political stridency against established norms and practices with which they are confronted' (Davies 2015: 66). According to the proponents of this approach, what distinguishes those individuals from the critical pedagogy ideal is an increased awareness about the susceptibility of their own positions and assumptions and a more pluralistic approach to critical thinking. What distinguishes criticality from the cognitive-skills-and-dispositions approach is the stronger ethical and civic dimension it injects into critical thinking. It lays emphasis on our acting in the world and our responsibility for the world around us. According to the criticality model, the paramount function of higher education is to produce critically thinking citizens. Some of the recent Swedish research literature on critical thinking in education shows an affinity with *criticality*, embracing its multi-perspectival approach (Wolrath-Söderberg 2016) or investigating the interconnections between critical thinking, democracy, and educational ideals (Bohlin 2014; Stenbock-Hult 2017).

In order to channel critical thinking toward critical acting and being, some sort of transformative learning must take place. Stephen Brookfield is an important critical thinking theorist who has paid special attention to transformative learning. His earlier work was a significant contribution to the research on critical thinking and emotions; that work is duly cited in my list of critical thinking dispositions. Brookfield's name is not usually associated with the criticality movement, but I would contend that more recently he has adopted much of the criticality perspective in his works on the theory and the teaching methodology of critical thinking. It is not his relatively frequent use of the word 'criticality' that makes me consider him

a representative of this direction, but his combination of the view of critical thinking as logicality (i.e. cognitive skills and dispositions) with a notion of critical thinking inspired by the critical social theory of Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt School, although he never refers to this approach as 'critical pedagogy'. In practice, he attends to criticality and the transformative dimension of learning to think critically through special focus on identifying and interrogating personal and disciplinary assumptions, looking at them from different perspectives, and, based on these processes, taking informed actions (Brookfield 2012).

Before leaving this discussion of the main approaches to critical thinking in higher education, I must mention an ongoing debate within that field. It is the famous debate between 'generalists' and 'specifists' (Moore 2011), that is, between scholars who approach critical thinking as discipline specific (McPeck 1990; Moore 2011) and theorists who consider it a generic skill or mode transferrable across disciplines (Ennis 1989; Brookfield 2012; Mulnix 2012; Davies 2015). It started with an intensive exchange between Ennis and McPeck, and, testifying to its endurance, the debate still informs comparative studies on the perception of critical thinking and its assessment in different school and higher education subjects (Nygren et al. 2018; Forbes 2018). For the project of introducing critical thinking in undergraduate courses in English literature, or in any discipline whatsoever, this debate is important because it makes the argument for critical thinking particularly alert to the specific knowledge content and objectives of that academic discipline. The 'specifist' argument seriously undermines one of the most frequent solutions to implement critical thinking in higher education, which is to include separate but compulsory courses in the curricula, a kind of Emersonian cow from which the rest may drink their milk. The other approach, which 'specifists' and some 'generalists' usually support, is to include critical thinking in the teaching of all disciplines and at all levels. Yet it is problematic to assume that critical thinking is a passe-partout in all the disciplines. We should therefore turn to disciplinary content and objectives to make any inferences about the usefulness and range of applicability of different notions of critical thinking to that discipline. A very restricted notion of critical thinking is likely to have a very limited impact on the learning in literary studies, for example.

3. Critical thinking and the learning objectives of English literary studies
3.1 Discipline-specific vs. generic critical thinking

The debate between 'generalists' and 'specifists' has inspired qualitative studies that have investigated the perceptions of critical thinking among teachers and students of various disciplines. Some of these studies have yielded interesting results with respect to the conceptualizations of critical thinking in literary studies. Moore (2011) interviewed faculty and analyzed assignment tasks for students from three discipline areas of the humanities: philosophy, history, and literary studies (each discipline being represented by six people). Although a key theme suggested by the informants' answers was that thinking critically in their disciplines has to do with making judgments, the study found significant differences among the disciplines concerning the nature of those judgments. For literary studies instructors, the judgments were not about evaluating texts (as they were for the philosophy teachers, for example), but about making connections with other texts or with certain theoretical notions. Students were not expected to produce evaluations but interpretations of the literary texts. To be critical in literary studies is to draw on certain conceptual criteria: genre, intertextuality, otherness, in order to produce a particular interpretation (2011: 269). Moore's study has very limited generalizability, but it seems to support the idea that critical thinking in literary studies is inseparable from the knowledge of concepts and terms of literary analysis. If one tries to assess the potential for critical thinking in a literature course, in addition to identifying certain skills or attitudes, one must therefore look into what is called 'knowledge and understanding' in Swedish curricular parlance. Another important finding is that being critical in literary studies is manifest in the interpretation of texts. It sounds like a truism to literary scholars, but, in critical thinking theory, 'interpretation' is a form of literacy that is distinct from both 'pure' argumentation skills, such as evaluation and persuasion, and the kind of literacy metaphorically called 'decodification' by Freire and other representatives of critical pedagogy. As Burbules and Berk explain, 'to decode' means to find a true but hidden meaning, whereas 'interpretation' means finding a meaning, but also '*creating* a meaning, or seeking out several alternative meanings' (1999: 60). The only school of critical thinking that embraces this kind of literacy and sees benefits in multiple and conflicting interpretations is the *criticality movement*.

In a more recent empirical study emanating from the said debate, Forbes (2018) turned her attention to the students' perspectives on critical thinking. She interviewed four first-year undergraduate students at a university in England, two of them enrolled in English courses and all of them having studied English literature to an advanced level in school. Although much more sympathetic to the generalist camp than Moore's, Forbes' study found that 'the overwhelming factor which seemed to influence the way students thought of, and engaged with, critical thinking was the particular discipline or subject' (2018: 438). Not losing hope for critical thinking across the disciplines, she concluded that the students' metacognitive awareness should be cultivated in order to enable them to not only reflect on their own work but also perceive the variations of discipline-specific critical thinking skills and identify opportunities for transfer (2018: 440). What makes Forbes' study interesting for this work is that, in addition to psychology, sociology, and philosophy, the respondents also referred to English literature when they discussed the differences in critical thinking. All the students compared literature with the sciences, and found it to be more accessible to thinking critically, or what they believed critical thinking to be. That is because, according to one respondent, 'there's no right or wrong answer, so it's just how you engage with the text mostly and sort of, engage with ideas' (2018: 438). Another student pointed to the multiplicity of perspectives and the opportunity to develop one's own based on the perspectives of the others, in contrast to the sciences, where things were 'a lot more' right or wrong. Yet another informant explained that she could justify her views based on the text at hand, so she did not feel the need to have a very wide knowledge base in the discipline (i.e. literary studies). These opinions and explanations may sound familiar to many literary studies academics. Of course, several interpretations may have equally strong claims to validity, but many others may simply be fallacious. Passing idle opinions, making unsubstantiated claims believing that 'everything goes' is the opposite of critical thinking in any subject, and one can only agree with Forbes that students would benefit from explanations and demonstrations of critical thinking within a particular discipline (2018: 439). Forbes embraced a cognitive model of critical thinking like the ones proposed by Ennis in his earlier work and Mulnix more recently. While this approach is very promising for the project of teaching critical thinking across the disciplines, it is less clear how it may respond to the need to explain and

demonstrate discipline-specific critical thinking skills expressed by Forbes' informants.

The two empirical studies presented here suggest that both teachers and students perceive critical thinking as discipline-specific skills and knowledge. Recent quantitative and qualitative analyses of Swedish ninth-graders' results at the national tests also suggest that critical thinking among students comprises different, subject-specific skills (Nygren et al. 2018). If there is a particular kind of critical thinking in literary studies in higher education, the first places to look for it are the general aims of the discipline, the curricular outcomes, and the learning objectives in individual course syllabi. However, not every learning objective pertains to critical thinking; in the following sections, I will correlate the relevant objectives with the four approaches to critical thinking that I have discussed in the previous section: *critical thinking as cognitive-argumentative skills, critical thinking as cognitive-argumentative skills and dispositions, critical pedagogy*, and *criticality.*

3.2 Elaine Showalter's list of disciplinary objectives and the critical thinking models

Acclaimed literary studies scholars are more often than not academics with long teaching careers, but very few of them do research on teaching. One exception is Elaine Showalter, an influential feminist critic and literary historian, who, after more than thirty years of teaching English literature at Rutgers and Princeton, turned her attention to pedagogy. In her book, *Teaching Literature*, she identified twelve competencies and skills that all college students could be expected to acquire in literary studies. One competence that is interesting from the point of view of critical thinking features as number four in her list: 'How to detect the cultural assumptions underlying writings from a different time or society, and in the process to become aware of one's own cultural assumptions' (2003: 26). It appears to echo the awareness objective of critical pedagogy, but Showalter seems to work with a more diffuse notion of *cultural* awareness that may not necessarily lead to the kind of praxis-oriented critical conscience that critical pedagogy aims to cultivate in students. On the other hand, Showalter's use of the phrase 'cultural assumptions' can be related to Brookfield's approach to criticality in higher education, which relies on interrogating personal, disciplinary, and the so-called 'paradigmatic' or ideological assumptions (2012).

Other objectives in Showalter's list of disciplinary skills and competences correspond to some of the propensities formulated by various proponents of the cognitive skills-and-dispositions approach: the desire to be well-informed ('How to seek out further knowledge about the literary work, its author, its content, or its interpretation'), the desire to seek reasons ('How to think creatively about problems by using literature as a broadening of one's experience and practical knowledge'), living an examined life ('How to think creatively within and beyond literary studies, making some connections between the literary work and one's own life'), and a host of dispositions ranging from open-mindedness to appreciation of individual differences supporting the aim 'to work and learn with others, taking literature as a focus for discussion and analysis' (2003: 26–27). A few competencies pertain to the argumentation skills of the first approach to critical thinking: 'How to relate … works to one another, and to synthesize ideas that connect them into a tradition or a literary period'; 'How to use literary models as cultural references, either to communicate with others or to clarify one's own ideas'; 'How to defend a critical judgment against the informed opinions of others' (2003: 26–27).

Showalter's taxonomy of skills and competences in literary studies is clearly open to the kind of critical thinking advocated by the more traditional 'schools'. It has, however, very little to say about acting or taking a stand in the world, about one's responsibility as a critical thinker, which, to remember, are major strains in the criticality approach. This is perhaps surprising considering Showalter's significant contribution to feminist literary theory and criticism. But her rather utilitarian approach to pedagogy, which she had made known in a few publications before her book came out, was criticized by Giroux (2001): 'In her zest for "concreteness", she abstracts pedagogical practices from the ethico-political visions that inform them and has little to say about how pedagogy relates the self to public life, social responsibility, or the demands of critical citizenship' (2001: 13). If at least a partial affinity with criticality can be detected in one learning objective, the concerns of critical pedagogy are alien to Showalter's vision of what students should learn from courses in English literature.

3.3 The Swedish national curricular objectives for the Bachelor Degree and the critical thinking models

There are, of course, many different conceptions of the aims of teaching English literature, and there are objective conditions for some conceptions to gain visibility while others wither in obscurity. Given the status of English as a global language, studying its literature as part of getting a degree in English should (in theory) involve similar learning outcomes in English-speaking countries and the rest of the world. In practice, however, national curricula, educational policies, local traditions, and even institutional or departmental policies play a role in the shaping of English literature courses and their learning objectives. Consequently, the conditions for critical thinking in the teaching of English literature vary significantly from course to course.

It can be argued that the general outcomes for the Bachelor Degree in Annex 2 of the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (2020) give us an idea about the overall potential for critical thinking in teaching any subject, including the sub-subject of English literature in Sweden, although the English literature modules included in teacher education programs have different curricular goals. As we have seen, one of those general outcomes is consistent with the argumentation-skills model of critical thinking. Reading the outcomes from the perspective of the argumentation-skills-and-dispositions approach, at least one other learning objective stands out as relevant for critical thinking, in the 'Judgment and approach' section: 'demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge and ongoing learning'.[6] In combination with cognitive skills, this outcome seems to promote inquisitiveness (Facione 1990) and the desire to be well-informed (Ennis 1985; Facione 1990). Another outcome in that section, 'demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues', might also be considered relevant for critical thinking as cognitive skills and dispositions because the competence to make discipline-informed judgments is complemented by social and ethical concerns. However, I would argue that this outcome does not refer to the cultivation of socio-ethical propensities, but to students' awareness of relevant social and ethical

[6] The learning outcomes are divided into three categories in Annex 2: 'Knowledge and understanding', 'Competence and skills', and 'Judgement and approach'. Not all individual course syllabi in Sweden follow this structure when presenting their learning objectives.

issues and their making judgments based on those issues. In other words, this objective requires students to take a stand on those issues, which is a characteristic of the criticality model of critical thinking. This line of reasoning is partially confirmed by the following 'Judgment and approach' outcome: 'demonstrate insight into the role of knowledge in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used', in which one may recognize two major criticality topics: critical reflection upon oneself and the discipline and the critical citizens' responsibility for the world around them.

3.4 The four models of critical thinking and the learning objectives for literary studies in undergraduate-level English course syllabi in Sweden

For those less familiar with the role and genre of the syllabi in Swedish higher education it must be stated that the course syllabi are public documents, and, like contracts, they are binding for the parties involved: the students and the teachers. This means that they 'have a strong influence on how both students and teachers conceive of the learning goals of the courses in which they are engaged' and express some ingrained conceptions and core beliefs about the subject (Alvstad & Castro 2009: 172). This is the main reason why the course syllabi are so useful for tracing any underlying conceptions of critical thinking, and the potential for it, within a discipline. The syllabi must be approved by the department and faculty boards, and teachers cannot make changes on their own, from semester to semester, so the learning goals usually remain unchanged for years. However, the language of the syllabi tends to be formulaic and general in order to allow teachers some freedom to interpret and apply the learning objectives. Clearly, a complete state-of-the-discipline analysis with respect to critical thinking must look beyond the syllabi, but this task is impossible here.

To identify the models of critical thinking that appear to be fostered in undergraduate-level English literature courses, I scrutinized fifty-four syllabi available on the homepages of twenty-two universities and colleges, that is, all the Swedish higher education institutions that offer courses or modules in English literature independently or within programs leading to degrees in English or in secondary and upper-secondary teacher education. Children's literature courses and modules in English courses for primary school teachers were not included in this analysis. Wherever possible, I tried to assess the English literature modules and courses

offered by a university at every level of undergraduate studies: introductory, intermediate, and supplementary.[7] Although the course syllabi are public documents in Sweden, not all of them were easily accessible via the university homepages. I used the official English versions wherever available, but some of the syllabi included in this analysis were only available in Swedish. Course contents and bibliographies were occasionally considered, but the focus was on the learning objectives. The learning objectives varied considerably, from very detailed to rather sparse or general, Stockholm University's syllabi being examples of the latter. This variation in the formulation of learning outcomes could even be observed between syllabi from the same institution (e.g. between English B and C at Luleå University). This is one reason why only about forty out of fifty-four syllabi are cited here. Another reason is that many objectives were repeated in several of the institution's syllabi, so I prioritized the syllabi that featured a greater variety of outcomes relevant for the critical thinking models. I tried to include only those syllabi that were valid in 2020, but that information was not always available or clearly stated on the universities' homepages. Furthermore, it is possible that some of the syllabi I read are no longer in use.

Inasmuch as critical thinking in literary studies means interpreting texts based on certain theoretical notions and methods (Moore 2011), most of the discipline-specific skills (and their knowledge base) can be seen as fostering critical thinking. The ability to analyze literary texts using the disciplinary terminology appeared in all syllabi. Without exception, in supplementary-level courses, they included the competence to analyze literary texts from theoretical perspectives; sometimes a certain perspective was emphasized: gender studies (Uppsala universitet 2016; Högskolan i Gävle 2019), postcolonialism (Uppsala universitet 2016; Linnéuniversitetet 2019), intertextuality (Umeå universitet 2019), or ecocriticism (Mälardalens högskola 2017). One institution stands out because it identified a theoretical perspective (narratology) already in the syllabus for an introductory-level course (Högskolan i Halmstad 2020a). Similarly, the ability to produce interpretations that relate literary texts to their social, cultural, and/or historical contexts, which featured among the

[7] In Sweden, these levels are identified by the codes G1N, G1F, and G2F, respectively. I have used Södertörn University's translation of these codes.

learning outcomes of virtually all intermediate-level courses, could be considered relevant for critical thinking in literary studies.

From this 'specifist' perspective, one may even conclude that, based on the syllabi, studying English literature as an academic subject in Sweden *is*, in fact, a way of learning and training critical thinking. However, in my analysis of the syllabi, I focused on those outcomes that may foster a more generic conception of critical thinking. I paid special attention to the objectives that included the words 'critical' or 'kritisk' and their derivatives, although not all of them were found to be explicit references to critical thinking. A distinction must be made here between the adjective 'critical' as the modifier in 'critical thinking' and the semantically related, but ultimately different, word derived from 'literary criticism'. In some documents (Uppsala universitet 2012, 2015; Linnéuniversitetet 2018; Umeå universitet 2019; Högskolan i Gävle 2019), 'critical'/ 'kritisk' referred to literary criticism, but the 'critical thinking' denotation was sometimes present in other outcomes pertaining to literature in the same syllabus.

The first criterion to evaluate the syllabi was provided by the approach to critical thinking as cognitive or argumentation skills. Distinguishing between reliable and unreliable information, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating arguments, making inferences and grasping the inferential connections between statements are examples of such skills. My investigation found that this conception of critical thinking with respect to the study of literature was present in all the syllabi. All of them mentioned the skills to analyze, evaluate and interpret literary, theoretical, and/or critical texts; syllabi from twelve universities and colleges also included the modifier 'critically'/ 'kritiskt'. Most of the syllabi referred specifically to argumentation norms that students should observe and apply in their own texts or oral presentations.[8] For example, students were expected to produce literary analyses in a 'clear', 'well-written', 'well-structured', 'coherent' or 'correct' way (Högskolan Kristianstad 2014; Mittuniversitet 2019, English A; Högskolan Dalarna 2014; Uppsala universitet 2012; Högskolan i Gävle 2019; Göteborgs universitet 2018a) and 'according to academic conventions' (Högskolan Väst 2018; Mälardalens högskola 2018). This objective was often coupled with 'correct source use'

[8] The exception were syllabi in which the reference to the literature module was unclear.

(Karlstads universitet 2019), critical review and assessment of source material (Högskolan Kristianstad 2014), 'critical source management' (Lunds universitet 2018), or relevant 'source criticism' (Mälardalens högskola 2018; Göteborgs universitet 2018b; Jönköping University 2019; Linköpings universitet 2020). Furthermore, fifteen percent of the syllabi referred to argumentation in terms of making inferential judgments and connections between ideas. Students were expected to 'argue for alternative interpretations' (Lunds universitet 2018), 'argue for their own critical interpretation of the material' (Högskolan Kristianstad 2018), demonstrate 'independent critical thought and argumentation' (Högskolan Väst 2019), and 'motivate their analyses in writing, pursuant to the requirements of literary scholarship' (my translation) (Stockholms universitet 2019).

The skill most frequently promoted in the analyzed syllabi (twenty percent) was self-reflection. Students should be able to 'critically reflect on [their] own and others' theoretical arguments' (Göteborgs universitet 2020; 2018a) or to 'critically and self-reflectively approach their own and others' written production' (my translation) (Lunds universitet 2019). It was also found in the competence to 'analyze and critically evaluate the student's own work and the work of others' (Högskolan i Gävle 2019), to 'defend and criticise their own standpoints regarding text analysis as well as those of their fellow students' (Högskolan i Skövde 2020), and, more generically, in the requirement that students 'reflect on their own ability to produce interpretations' (Malmö universitet 2019). However, the objective to 'demonstrate a scholarly approach in reviewing and discussing other students' research essays, as well as one's own' (Högskolan Väst 2018) did not specifically refer to self-reflection because scholarly approaches do not necessarily involve self-reflective critical thinking.

The cognitive-argumentative-skills approach dominated the conceptualization of critical thinking in the English literature syllabi, but the argumentation-skills-and-dispositions approach was also present, although less frequently. Five syllabi from four institutions cultivated the disposition of flexibility, for example in the objective to 'compare, assess and argue for different analyses of a single text' (Lunds universitet 2019). Similarly, the 'ability to analyse and critically evaluate literary texts from different theoretical perspectives' (Mittuniversitet 2019) also pertained to flexibility. A syllabus objective that cultivated not only flexibility, but also

open-mindedness, intellectual humility, and sensitivity to others' feelings was to 'provide constructive criticism on the research of others as well as evaluate and take into consideration constructive criticism of the student's own work' (Högskolan i Gävle 2019). Finally, the desire to be well-informed was contained in only one syllabus, in the learning objective for students to 'identify their need of further knowledge to improve their skills in English' (Lunds universitet 2015), which was somewhat surprising given that this propensity is included in the general outcomes for the Degree of Bachelor (Swedish Higher Education Ordinance 2020).

One approach to critical thinking that is not represented in the Qualification Descriptors but could be detected in English literature syllabi is critical pedagogy. Teaching literature is ideal for raising awareness of past and present oppressive norms and hegemonic practices (Beach et al. 2016). It is therefore not surprising that aspects of critical pedagogy permeate many of the syllabi in this sample. However, one may recall that, according to this approach to critical thinking, being aware of oppression and its ideological foundations is important only insomuch as it leads to a praxis-bound critical conscience. Different degrees of engagement with the practice of critical pedagogy could therefore be detected among the syllabi. Being 'able to show an awareness of the importance of a gender perspective' (Uppsala universitet 2012), analyzing literary texts from that perspective (Högskolan i Gävle 2019), 'tak[ing] into account an overall gender and multicultural perspective' (Jönköping University 2019), or accounting for 'equality, gender, sexual orientation, class and ethnicity' (Karlstads universitet 2018), or 'the ideological perspectives on literature' (Högskolan Dalarna 2014) in literary analyses may be regarded as the first level of educating critical thinkers in the spirit of critical pedagogy. A deeper level of engagement with critical pedagogy was arguably at work in such learning objectives as 'making critical assessments with regard to the importance of culture for a sustainable social progress' (Göteborgs universitet 2018a), assessing 'the implicit and explicit statements about class, gender and ethnicity in a text' (Lunds universitet 2018), or demonstrating 'insight into the struggle for social equality in American society during different periods and in different spheres, including ethnic and gender equality' (my translation) (Örebro universitet 2018).

The last criteria to evaluate the selected syllabi in terms of their relevance and potential for critical thinking were provided by the

criticality approach. Its attention to the socio-ethical dimension of learning and the critical thinkers' responsibility for the world around them informs a much broader conception of self-reflection than the one presupposed by the metacognitive disposition in the argumentation-skills-and-dispositions approach. Rather than becoming aware of certain thought processes (as in the case of students reviewing others' works or adopting different theoretical perspectives), practicing critical self-reflection according to the criticality approach means evaluating and critiquing oneself and the discipline (Barnett 1997). A learning outcome included in all the syllabi for intermediate-level English literature courses and modules at a university accounted for both disciplinary scrutiny and the individual's role and responsibility, the student being expected to 'reflect on the conditions of humanities studies and their own role as a producer of knowledge' (Södertörns högskola 2018). However, it is the way in which the learners were situated in relation to the discipline that mainly allowed for the identification of stronger and weaker expressions of criticality in the learning objectives. An example of the former appears in this objective: 'with a historical perspective and on the basis of central research concepts, theories and methods critically relate to the limitations and possibilities of language, literature and culture with regard to sustainable social progress' (Göteborgs universitet 2020). In a syllabus for a third-term literature course at the same university, there was the objective to 'critically reflect on the bases and central problems of literary studies as well as on the role and function of literary studies in a modern society' (Göteborgs universitet 2018b). Similarly, outcomes such as to 'reflect upon the role of literature for sustainable development' (Mälardalens högskola 2017), to discuss 'the role of literature in describing the human experience', or, in the same course, the significance of literature in shedding light on social issues regarding nationhood, social and cultural identity (Högskolan Dalarna 2014) were designed to induce disciplinary self-reflection. The seemingly related aim to 'critically examine the theoretical questions that are used in literary research' (Linéuniversitetet 2019) also cultivated reflection on the discipline, but lacked the clear socio-ethical premises of the other ones, so it could by identified as an expression of criticality in the weak sense. Another kind of criticality in the strong sense referred to the individual learner's awareness of her own political and ethical role in the world, for example by 'showing inter-cultural understanding and ethical awareness' (Högskolan Dalarna 2016),

being 'critically aware of his or her own cultural standpoint in literary analysis' (Malmö universitet 2016), or understanding 'the importance of the cultural and historical perspective used in literary text analyses in relation to oneself, one's culture and the present' (my translation) (Luleå tekniska universitet 2019). Expressions of criticality in a weaker sense could be found in the learning outcomes that mentioned the necessity to include social and/or ethical aspects in the student's assessment of disciplinary content (Jonköping University 2019; Umeå universitet 2019; Högskolan i Halmstad 2020b).

4. Future Destinations

In this paper, I have identified and discussed four models of critical thinking: as *cognitive-argumentative skills*, as *cognitive-argumentative skills and dispositions*, *critical pedagogy*, and *criticality*. My analysis of the English literature syllabi offered by twenty-two higher education institutions in Sweden indicates that many of the outcomes are relevant for critical thinking if one takes into account the diverse conceptualizations of critical thinking in higher education currently at work in this field of research. This analysis and the discussion of the four major critical thinking models and traditions will hopefully contribute to the way in which we think of critical thinking in the teaching of English literature in higher education.

I hope this has also been an argument for the discipline's great potential for critical thinking. The lines chosen as the epigraph for this article contain an aphorism about the value and role of literature, namely its unique capacity to transport readers on imaginary journeys that are spiritually enriching. To this venerable idea, this essay appends the proposition that the study of literature can also take us very far on the journey to understand the world and ourselves, to think, act, and live our lives as critical thinkers. There is, however, plenty of room for doing much more to include critical thinking in our discipline and in our teaching. Of the democratic goal of educating critical citizens, our current syllabi and curricular aims say very little; only a tiny few critical thinking dispositions seem to be cultivated in these syllabi, and the radical critical thinking goals of critical pedagogy are restricted to raising awareness about oppressive practices and ideologies. Whether we might need syllabi that more thoroughly account for all conceptions of critical thinking or syllabi that more consistently pursue certain discipline-specific critical thinking goals

in accordance with one model of critical thinking is another interesting question to discuss in the future.

Of course, the syllabi can never tell the whole story of critical thinking and English literature in higher education. One may have excellent understanding of the different approaches to critical thinking and of the present curricular, disciplinary, and institutional conditions and opportunities to implement it in higher education, but teaching English literature with the purpose of cultivating critical thinking in accordance with the aims, practices, and methods of any one of the approaches I have discussed here is a very different matter. Ultimately, it is up to the teacher to adopt a suitable critical thinking ideal and follow it through in her teaching of English literature. But if we are committed to pursuing this ideal in our teaching, we should at least be aware of its place within the theory and research on critical thinking in higher education. As a university teacher of English literature, I have chosen *criticality* to guide my teaching of the subject, but how I pursue its pedagogical vision and deal with the challenges imposed by the discipline and the academic culture are, for the time being, future research destinations.

References

Alvstad, Cecilia, and Andrea Castro. 2009. Conceptions of literature in university language courses. *The Modern Language Journal* 93(2): 170–184.

Barnett, Ronald. 1997. *Higher education: A critical business.* Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press.

Beach, Richard, Deborah Appleman, Bob Fecho, and Rob Simon. 2016. *Teaching literature to adolescents*. New York: Routledge.

Bohlin, Henrik. 2009. Perspective-dependence and critical thinking. *Argumentation* 23: 189–203. DOI 10.1007/s10503-008-9119-6.

Bohlin, Henrik. 2014. Bildning, dialog och kritisk självreflektion. *Södertörn Studies in Higher Education* 5. Södertörns högskola, 118–131.

Brodin, Eva. 2007. "*Critical thinking in scholarship: Meaning, conditions and development*." PhD Diss., Lund University.

Brookfield, Stephen D. 1987. *Developing critical thinkers: Challenging adults to explore alternative ways of thinking and acting*. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press.

Brookfield, Stephen D. 2012. *Teaching for critical thinking. Tools and techniques to help students question their assumptions.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Burbules, Nicholas, and Rupert Berk. 1999. Critical thinking and critical pedagogy: Relations, differences, and limits. In *Critical theories in education. Changing terrains of knowledge and politics*, edited by Thomas S. Popkewitz and Lynn Fendler, 45–65, New York: Routledge.

Davies, Martin. 2015. A model of critical thinking in higher education. In *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research,* edited by Michael B. Paulsen, 41–92, Springer. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-12835-1_2.

Davies, Martin, and Ronald Barnett. 2015. Introduction. In *The Palgrave handbook of critical thinking*, edited by Martin Davies and Ronald Barnett, 1–25, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dewey, John. 1910. *How we think*. Boston: Heath.

Ellerton, Peter. 2015. Metacognition and critical thinking: Some pedagogical imperatives. In *The Palgrave handbook of critical thinking*, edited by Martin Davies and Ronald Barnett, 409–426, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ennis, Robert H. 1962. A concept of critical thinking. *Harvard Educational Review* 32(1): 81–111.

Ennis, Robert H. 1985. A logical basis for measuring critical thinking skills. *Educational Leadership* 43(2): 44–48.

Ennis, Robert H. 1989. Critical thinking and subject specificity: Clarification and needed research. *Educational Researcher* 18(3): 4–10.

Eriksson, Lars Torsten. 2018. *Kritiskt tänkande*, Upplaga 3. Stockholm: Liber.

European Commission. 2017. Communication on a renewed EU agenda for higher education. Accessed November 20, 2019. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017DC0247&from=DA.

Facione, Peter A. 1990. *Critical thinking: A statement of expert consensus for purposes of educational assessment and instruction. Research findings and recommendations*. Report. American Philosophical Association.

Forbes, Karen. 2018. Exploring first year undergraduate students' conceptualizations of critical thinking skills. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 30(3): 433–442. DOI 10.21832/9781788929752-008.

Freire, Paulo 2000. *Pedagogy of the oppressed. 30th anniversary edition.* Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum.

Giroux, Henry A. 2001. Pedagogy of the depressed: Beyond the new politics of cynicism. *College Literature* 28(3): 1–32.

Göteborgs universitet 2018a. English: Introductory course. Literary and culture studies, 15 credits. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://kursplaner.gu.se/pdf/kurs/en/EN1112.

Göteborgs universitet 2018b. In-depth course in English, literary specialization, 15 credits. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://kursplaner.gu.se/pdf/kurs/en/EN1310.

Göteborgs universitet 2020. EN1210 English, Intermediate Course, 30 credits. Accessed January 5, 2020. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://kursplaner.gu.se/pdf/kurs/en/EN1210.

Halonen, Jane S. 1995. Demystifying critical thinking. *Teaching of Psychology* 22(1): 75–81.

Huber, Christopher R., and Nathan R. Kuncel. 2016. Does college teach critical thinking? A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research* 86(2): 431–468. DOI 10.3102/0034654315605917.

Högskolan Dalarna 2014. Literature in English. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.du.se/en/study-at-du/kurser/syllabus/?code=EN1120.

Högskolan Dalarna 2016. The history of British and American literature and ideas. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.du.se/en/study-at-du/kurser/syllabus/?code=EN1130.

Högskolan i Gävle 2019. English (61–90) 30 cr. Accessed January 5, 2020. http://utb.hig.se/fafne/app/public/pdf/course.pdf?identifier=ENG804&lang=en.

Högskolan i Halmstad 2020a. Engelska (1–30), 30 hp. Accessed December 20, 2020. http://utbildning.hh.se/se_proxy/utb_kursplan.asp?kurskod=EN1001&revisionsnr=27,000&format=pdf&lang=SW.

Högskolan i Halmstad 2020b. Engelska (31–60), 30 hp. Accessed December 20, 2020. http://utbildning.hh.se/se_proxy/utb_kursplan.asp?kurskod=EN3001&revisionsnr=25,000&format=pdf&lang=SW.

Högskolan i Skövde 2020. Engelska: Samtida engelskspråkig skönlitteratur, G1N, 7,5 hp. Accessed December 20, 2020.

https://www.his.se/utbildning/fristaende-kurser/engelska/engelska-samtida-engelsksprakig-skonlitteratur-g1n-en203g/.

Högskolan Kristianstad 2014. English II—30 credits—Course syllabus. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.hkr.se/en/course/ENK301/course-syllabus.

Högskolan Kristianstad 2018. English III—30 credits—Course syllabus. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.hkr.se/en/course/ENK603/course-syllabus.

Högskolan Väst 2018. English, ONLINE, 61–90, 30 HE credits. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://kursinfo-print.hv.se/CoursePlan/Pdf/EON200/6%2c000/en.

Högskolan Väst 2019. English intermediate level: Literary history and intertextuality, 15 HE credits. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://kursinfo-print.hv.se/CoursePlan/Pdf/ENL210/1%2c000/en

Jönköping University 2019. English 1–30, 30 credits. Accessed January 5, 2020. http://kursinfoweb.hj.se/en/course_syllabuses/LE1G18.html?revision=4,000&semester=20192.

Kalonaityté, Viktorija 2014. *Normkritisk pedagogik—för den högre utbildningen*, Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Karlstads universitet 2018. Kursplan. Engelska III. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www3.kau.se/kursplaner/sv/ENGCG1_20182_sv.pdf.

Karlstads universitet 2019. Syllabus. English B. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www3.kau.se/kursplaner/en/ENGB60_20201_en.pdf.

Kurfiss, Joanne G. 1988. *Critical thinking: Theory, research, practice, and possibilities*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 2. Washington, D. C.: Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Linköpings universitet 2020. Kursplan. Engelska 2. Accessed June 3, 2020. https://liu.se/studieinfo/kurs/711g25/vt-2020.

Linnéuniversitetet 2018. 1EN200 Engelska, allmän kurs, fortsättningskurs, 30 högskolepoäng. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://kursplan.lnu.se/kursplaner/syllabus-1EN200-9.pdf.

Linnéuniversitetet 2019. 2EN200 Teman i engelsk litteraturvetenskap, 15 hp. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://kursplan.lnu.se/kursplaner/syllabus-2EN200-7.pdf.

Luleå tekniska universitet 2019. Kursplan. Engelska B 30 högskolepoäng. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.ltu.se/edu/course/E00/E0012S-Engelska-B-1.67889?kursView=kursplan.

Lunds universitet 2015. ENGH05, English: Level 3—B.A. Course (61–75), 15 credits. Accessed January 5, 2020. http://kursplaner.lu.se/pdf/kurs/en/ENGH05.

Lunds universitet 2018. ENGA22, English: Level 2, 30 credits. Accessed January 5, 2020. http://kursplaner.lu.se/pdf/kurs/en/ENGA22.

Lunds universitet 2019. ENGB41, Engelska: Litteraturvetenskaplig analys, 7,5 högskolepoäng. Accessed January 5, 2020. http://kursplaner.lu.se/pdf/kurs/sv/ENGB41.

Malmö universitet 2016. Reading and responding, 7.5 credits. Accessed June 3, 2020. https://edu.mah.se/en/Course/EN218A?v=4&full=true.

Malmö universitet 2019. Introduction to the theory of literature, 7.5 credits. Accessed June 3, 2020. https://edu.mah.se/en/Course/EN241B?v=1.3&full=true.

McPeck, John E. 1990. Critical thinking and subject specificity: A reply to Ennis. *Educational Researcher* 19(4): 10–12.

Mittuniversitet 2019. Syllabus English BA (A), 30 credits. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.miun.se/en/education/courses/languages-literature-history-and-religion/english/english-ba-a-30-credits/course-plan/?kursplanid=22307.

Mittuniversitet 2019. Kursplan för engelska GR (C), 30 hp. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.miun.se/utbildning/kurser/sprak-litteratur-historia-och-religion/engelska/engelska-gr-c-30-hp/kursplan/?kursplanid=22308.

Moore, Tim John. 2011. Critical thinking and disciplinary thinking. A continuing debate. *Higher Education Research & Development* 30(3): 261–274. DOI 10.1080/07294360.2010.501328.

Mulnix, Jennifer W. 2012. Thinking critically about critical thinking. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 44(5): 464–479. DOI 10.1111/j.1469-5812.2010.00673.x.

Mälardalens högskola 2017. Course Syllabus—English for English teachers 5, 15 credits. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.mdh.se/en/malardalen-university/education/course-syllabus?id=28933.

Mälardalens högskola 2018. Engelska 1: Litteratur 1, 7.5 hp. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.mdh.se/utbildning/kursplan?id=29210.

Nygren, Thomas, Jesper Haglund, Christopher Robert Samuelsson, Åsa Af Geijerstam, and Johan Prytz. 2018. Critical thinking in national

tests across four subjects in Swedish compulsory school. *Education Inquiry*. DOI: 10.1080/20004508.2018.1475200.

Paul, Richard. 1993. *Critical thinking: What every person needs to survive in a rapidly changing world*. Tomales, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Paul, Richard, and Linda Elder. 2001. *Miniature guide to critical thinking: Concepts & tools*. Tomales, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Paul, Richard, and Linda Elder. 2009. Critical thinking: Ethical reasoning and fairminded thinking. Part I. *Journal of Developmental Education* 33(1): 36–37.

Siegel, Harvey. 1988. *Educating reason. Rationality, critical thinking, and education*. New York: Routledge.

Showalter, Elaine. 2003. *Teaching literature*, Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Sporrong, Elin, and Karin Westin Tikkanen. (Eds.). 2016. *Kritiskt tänkande – I teori och praktik*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Stenbock-Hult, Bettina. 2016. *Kritiskt förhållningssätt*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Stockholms universitet 2019. Kursplan Engelska III—litteraturvetenskap, 15 hp. Accessed December 20, 2020. https://sisu.it.su.se/pdf_creator/37496/52040.

Swedish Higher Education Ordinance. 2020. Annex 2. Transl. Swedish Council for Higher Education. Accessed December 10, 2020. https://www.uhr.se/en/start/laws-and-regulations/Laws-and-regulations/The-Higher-Education-Ordinance/Annex-2/.

Södertörns högskola. 2018. Multiethnic literature and culture, 9 credits. Accessed June 3, 2020. https://dubhe.suni.se/apps/planer/new/showSyll.asp?cCode=1116EN&cID=5190&lang=eng.

Thayer-Bacon, Barbara J. 1998. Transforming and redescribing critical thinking: Constructive thinking. *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 17: 123–148. DOI 10.1023/A:1005166416808.

Umeå universitet 2017. Kursplan: Engelska B, 30 hp. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.umu.se/utbildning/kurser/engelska-b/kursplan/.

Umeå universitet 2019. Kursplan: Engelska C, 15 hp. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.umu.se/utbildning/kurser/engelska-c/kursplan/.

Uppsala universitet 2012. Syllabus for English A1. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://uu.se/en/admissions/freestanding-courses/course-syllabus/?kpid=25911&lasar=20%2F21&typ=1.

Uppsala universitet 2015. Syllabus for English B1. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.uu.se/en/admissions/freestanding-courses/course-syllabus/?kpid=31816&list=21822&type=1.

Uppsala universitet 2016. Syllabus for English literature and the canon: Tradition and innovation. Accessed January 5, 2020. https://www.uu.se/en/admissions/freestanding-courses/course-syllabus/?kpid=31967&list=19576&type=1.

Wolrath-Söderberg, Mara. 2016. Att få ihop teorier, praktik och kritiskt tänkande i seminariet—ett topiskt förslag. *Högre Utbildning* 6(1): 31–49.

Örebro universitet 2018. Kursplan Engelska IIIb, inriktning gymnasieskolan, 30 hp. Accessed December 20, 2020. https://api.oru.se/oruapi/v1/utbildningsinformation/utbildning/EN025G?typ=kurs&accept=html&revision=2.000&sprak=sv.