

MASTER'S THESIS

The art of education: Exploring the learning potential of aesthetic engagement with speculative fiction in a Bildung-theoretical perspective through Ursula K Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*

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Abstract

There is a recurring issue in international educational discourse which involves reconciling pupil individuality and autonomy with standardized testing and political accountability. In Norway, the concept of Bildung has been revitalized over the past two decades, with Klafki's categorial Bildung-theory envisioning Bildung as a dialectic process between subjective the objective elements, through which the pupil may experience development and profound insight. This thesis posits that Bildung through aesthetic engagement with speculative fiction is a powerful educational tool for understanding and shaping human experiences. The thesis investigates the potential of aesthetic engagement to facilitate Bildung through an analysis of Ursula K. Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed*. The study examines how the novel's content aligns with the Bildung-oriented goals of the Norwegian LK20 curriculum and explores how 10th-grade English as a Foreign Language pupils may benefit from aesthetic and critical engagement with it. The thesis is structured around a reader-oriented literary analysis of *The Dispossessed* within a Bildung-theoretical framework. The Bildung-theoretical framework is represented by Klafki's categorial theory, and utilizes his notions of the exemplary, elementary, and fundamental layers of Bildung. The analysis centers on four fundamental categories of Bildung: aesthetics and literature, philosophical-existential, language and culture, and social-ethical. These categories are tied to the LK20's discussions of Bildung in the interdisciplinary topic democracy and citizenship and the English subject-specific topic of intercultural competence. The analysis demonstrates that *The Dispossessed* intricately incorporates these Bildung categories into its narrative and employs Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature to hypothesize how readers in transaction with these categories may experience immersion in aesthetic experience. The thesis discusses aesthetic literary engagement as a powerful facilitator of Bildung and presents recommendations for the practical implementation of fictional literature in Norwegian teaching-practices, emphasizing the guidelines set by Klafki's categorial theory of Bildung.

Sammendrag

Det er et tilbakevendende problem i internasjonal utdanningsdiskurs som omhandler balansen mellom elevens individualitet og autonomi på den ene siden og standardiserte tester og politisk ansvarliggjøring på den andre. I Norge har danningsbegrepet blitt revitalisert de siste to tiårene, spesielt Klafkis kategoriale danningsteori, hvilket presenterer danning som en dialektisk prosess mellom subjektive og objektive elementer, som eleven gjennom kan oppleve utvikling og dyp innsikt. Denne avhandlingen hevder at Bildung gjennom estetisk engasjement med spekulativ fiksjon er et kraftig utdanningsverktøy for å forstå og forme menneskelige erfaringer. Avhandlingen undersøker potensialet for estetisk engasjement til å fremme Bildung gjennom Ursula K. Le Guins roman *The Dispossessed*. Oppgaven vurderer hvordan romanens innhold samsvarer med de Bildung-orienterte målene i den norske LK20-læreplanen og utforsker hvordan 10. klasse elever i Engelsk som fremmedspråk kan dra nytte av estetisk og kritisk engasjement med den. Avhandlingen er strukturert rundt en leserorientert litteraturanalyse av *The Dispossessed* innenfor en Bildung-teoretisk ramme. Den Bildung-teoretiske rammen er representert av Klafkis kategoriale teori, og bruker hans begreper om de eksemplariske, elementære og fundamentale lagene av Bildung. Analysen sentrerer rundt fire fundamentale kategorier av Bildung: estetikk og litteratur, filosofisk-eksistensiell, språk og kultur, og sosial-etisk. Disse kategoriene er knyttet til LK20s diskusjoner om Bildung i det tverrfaglige temaet demokrati og medborgerskap og i det Engelsk fagspesifikke temaet interkulturell kompetanse. Analysen viser at disse Bildung-kategoriene på intrikat vis er inkorporert i *The Dispossessed* sitt narrativ, og anvender Rosenblatts transaksjonsteori om litteratur for å stille hypoteser om hvordan lesere i transaksjon med disse kategoriene kan oppleve og erkjenne estetiske erfaringer. Avhandlingen diskuterer estetisk litterært engasjement som en kraftig tilrettelegger for Bildung, og presenterer anbefalinger for praktisk implementering av fiktiv litteratur i norsk undervisningspraksis, med vekt på føringene Klafkis kategoriale teori setter for danning.

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1. Introduction

Although recognition of the fact still halts, because of traditions established before the power of art was adequately recognized, science itself is but a central art auxiliary to the generation and utilization of other arts. (Dewey, 2005, p. 26)

The school is broadly the state's institutional upbringing of citizens, symbolizing a societal will to the future. The conceptual delineation of the purpose of education is informed by inquiries both critical: *what powers wills and to what ends?* and idealistic; *How can society, ultimately humanity, survive and thrive? What values, attitudes, and knowledge serve this end, and how are they effectively imparted?* Reading Dewey's above quote, I am reminded of a conversation I overheard during the recent Christmas holidays, in which my sister and her partner discussed the subtle yet profound insight they experienced having just read Jon Fosse's *Septology*. Voracious readers both, they shared in a moment of incredulity over their mutual friend whom, on a previous occasion, had announced (referring to non-fiction) "I only read books I can learn from". Fearing a societal engendering of such an attitude, this thesis seeks to explore the enduring significance of art and aesthetic engagement in the context of education and personal development.

The arts remain a crucial but underutilized component in shaping not only academic but also social and personal capabilities. Dewey's assertion that science is "but a central art" (2005, p. 26) necessary for understanding and applying other forms of art, parallels the central premise of this thesis: that aesthetic engagement, through literature, serves as a powerful educational tool in understanding and shaping a multifaceted human experience. More specifically, art and literature are presented as central to the development of *Bildung*, which is understood as the holistic formation of the human being in an ethical-cultural perspective. As someone who has grown up immersed in fantastical and speculative fictional literature, I have a particular affinity for these genres and a conviction that they, despite historical marginalization, offer valuable insights into human experience and social development. These genres challenge readers to consider ethical complexities and social dynamics in a manner that is often unbounded by the limitations of conventional realism. Therefore, as exemplified through a literary analysis of Ursula K Le Guin's 1974 *The Dispossessed* (2002), this thesis aims to establish a *Bildung*-theoretical foundation for investigating the potential of literary aesthetic engagement.

1.1 Background and Relevance

1.1.1 Bildung and the Purpose of Education

The duty of the individual is to accept no rule, to be the initiator of his own acts, to be responsible. Only if he does so will the society live, and change, and adapt, and survive. (Le Guin, 2002, p. 295)

In the above quote from *The Dispossessed* (2002), Le Guin explores through the character Shevek the individual's duty to take responsibility for society and oneself in the name of one's own moral conscience, despite or independent of social norms and political law; civil disobedience, in the extreme. In so doing, Le Guin indicates a central issue in contemporary liberal democracies, what Mouffe (2000) termed 'the democratic paradox', namely the tension between democracy's idea of popular sovereignty on the one hand and political liberalism's ideal of individual liberty on the other. In other words, "that it is legitimate to establish limits to popular sovereignty in the name of liberty" (Mouffe, 2000, p. 4).

Le Guin's assertion of individual responsibility reflects the political philosophy of Mouffe which holds plurality, in and through individual freedom, as the defining feature of liberal democracies.

In international discourse on the purpose of education there is a recurring question that also pertains to this issue of the democratic paradox, as scholars such as Biesta (2020), Dewey (2018), Nussbaum (2006), and Westbury et al. (1999) grapple with reconciling didactic and ethical concerns of pupil individuality and autonomy with a pragmatic governing that through for example standardized testing and political accountability reinforces society as heterogeneous. In other words, the problem of the democratic paradox is evidently manifest in the sphere of education, such as in the tensions of Biesta's purposes of education (2020): is the primary purpose of education to prepare pupils for the workforce, emphasizing measurable competencies? Or to foster well-rounded individuals capable of critical and ethical reasoning? How much emphasis should be placed on the pupil as a subject of their own life, regardless of the objects of educational intervention?

This debate is also unfolding in Norway, where the concept of Bildung, and Klafki's categorial theory of Bildung in particular, has seen a revitalization over the past 20 years (Straum, 2018). Bildung, as the term has been understood in German pedagogic thinking since the 19th century, pertains to just such questions on the purpose of education; it is a central category to characterize and determine the goals of upbringing (Klafki, 2001, p. 168).

In other words, Bildung can be generally understood as the didactics of formation; the how and what and why of the most holistic notion of education. Klafki's categorial Bildung-theory (2001) envisions education as a dialectic process, where learning material is not merely for knowledge acquisition but is a medium for the learner to experience a profound interaction with the world. As such, in simplified terms, the learner must engage autonomously with the knowledge for it to result in Bildung (Klafki, 2001, p. 190).

Klafki's theory posits that true education happens when pupils critically engage with content that resonates with their inner values and contributes to their ability to navigate and shape society. It suggests that education should enable the unfolding of personal potential in harmony with cultural and societal growth. In this regard Klafki's notion of Bildung is itself conciliatory in that it conceives of education occurring in a dialectic process between the objective and the subjective, explaining how individual formation occurs in the intersection between the external and internal world. Indeed, while Bildung has been criticized as a fuzzy concept with multiple, often contradictory perspectives (Fauskevåg, 2022), Horlacher points out one common thread running through intellectual and cultural traditions of Bildung: "the supposition that there is a link between the individual and his or her (inner) cultivation (...) and the development of a better society brought about through the fulfillment of each individual that comprises it" (2015, pp. 2–3).

In *Democracy and Education*, originally published in 1916, Dewey warned of an increasingly instrumental and positivist school that in absence of more natural or normative learning-experiences alienates pupils from themselves and democratic society (2001, p. 14). In particular, as reflected in the opening quote of this thesis (Dewey, 2005, p. 26), he held art as the keystone of learning. Dewey's apprehensions resonate today as the pressure for schools to perform on standardized assessments often overshadows the broader educational goal of fostering individual growth and societal engagement. In Norwegian primary education, it is easy to juxtapose Dewey's concern with the significant shift towards accountability and quality assessment after the PISA shock in 2001. The response to the PISA shock has brought about a paradigm shift in Norwegian education, steering pedagogy toward a performance-oriented model (Bjordal & Haugen, 2021). This type of governance, in line with the international predominance (Bjordal & Haugen, 2021, p. 19) of New Public Management, has turned the school into an arena that sometimes prioritizes standardized national and international competitiveness at the expense of pupil development, learning, and mental well-being (Federici & Skaalvik, 2017, p. 186, as cited in Befring, 2018, p. 53). In this context, the

tension of the democratic paradox can be seen in the sphere of educational philosophy in terms of the balance between cultivating Bildung and performance-orientation.

The national curriculum for the knowledge promotion (the LK20) addresses these challenges by incorporating, amongst others, implicit and explicit Bildung-oriented goals, evident in both the Core Curriculum (2017) and in reference to the development of intercultural competence (IC) in the English subject curriculum (Fenner & Skulstad, 2020, p. 142). For example, the Core Curriculum's 'Principles for education and all-round development' emphasize the school's mission to educate and develop all pupils, focusing on intellectual freedom, independence, responsibility, and compassion for others (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 12). As will be discussed in section 2.1.4 of the theory chapter, however, research relating to the LK20's treatment of Bildung disagrees on whether the national curriculum represents an adequate conception of Bildung (Befring, 2018; Bergheim, 2024; Fauskevåg, 2022).

1.1.2 Fictional Literature and Learning

In contemporary society, there is a concerning trend of declining rates of reading literature among youth, which is evident on global (OECD, 2023; Twenge et al., 2019) and national (Roe, 2020) scales. All these studies point to, amongst other factors, the pervasive influence of digital media and technology, and that traditional reading habits are increasingly being supplanted by screen-based activities, leading to diminished engagement with literary texts. It should be noted, while not subject of the present study, that digital media represents opportunities just as well as challenges, and that its interactive and immersive nature also presents untapped opportunities for promoting literary engagement in ways that resonate with contemporary youth.

At present, however, the decline in traditional reading habits poses challenges for academic performance and lifelong learning. Fiction reading represent not only a primary activity for acquiring knowledge and intellectual growth, but has also been recognized as a powerful tool for fostering imagination, creativity, and emotional intelligence (Bal & Veltkamp, 2013; Koopman, 2018; Lauritzen, 2019; Nussbaum, 1992; Rosenblatt, 1995). Literature and narrative texts that challenge our imagination and moral compass facilitate Bildung by fostering empathy, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of the human condition. In this regard the focus on reading for pleasure, aesthetic reading, is central in facilitating the level of emotional investment and genuine engagement that preconditions fostering of imagination and empathy. Aesthetic reading, however, has largely been

overshadowed by efferent reading, which focuses on retaining specific information, in Norwegian primary education (Hennig, 2017, p. 112). Fenner explains that although employing literature to explain a specific topic is not inherently problematic, it becomes an issue when it is used solely “as a tool to gain knowledge of a topic” (2020, p. 240). Furthermore, a study investigating the effect of pleasure reading versus intensive reading on language fluency found that all pleasure reading groups made greater gains than the intensive reading group (Beglar et al., 2012). Thus, examining how *The Dispossessed* can foster Bildung becomes significant, offering avenues for revitalizing literary engagement and addressing contemporary educational challenges.

This thesis, rooted in the theoretical perspective of Bildung, aims to investigate the potential learning outcomes of engaging with speculative fiction. Specifically, it examines aesthetic engagement with speculative fiction as demonstrated with *The Dispossessed*. Emphasizing the promotion of literature for the joy of reading and art itself, this thesis aims to facilitate lifelong learning. The reading of a literary work, as Rosenblatt aptly stated, “is a kind of valuable experience in and for itself, and yet—or perhaps, therefore—it can also have a liberating and fortifying effect in the ongoing life of the reader” (1995, p. 277). In other words, the intrinsic joy derived from literary exploration is an end in itself, but also serves as a springboard for social growth and a lifelong engagement with learning and personal development.

The focus on aesthetic reading and the pleasure of reading is part of the reasoning for this thesis’ investigation of speculative fiction literature in particular. Speculative fiction has not only great capacity to imaginatively entertain, but also encourages readers to envision alternative ways of life and to confront complex ethical dilemmas. Speculative genres like fantasy and science fiction, however, have traditionally been treated, in Le Guin’s own words, “[as] despised, marginal genres (...), excluded from critical, academic, [and] canonical supervision” (1989, “Fisherwoman’s Daughter”). This is changing, as there is a growing body of theory on science-fiction and fantasy in general (Coste, 2021; Science Fiction Foundation, 1972-) as well as in Bildung-related contexts (Syed et al., 2021, as cited in Hixon, 2016; Wu et al., 2022). Once sidelined, science fiction and fantasy are now gaining recognition for their depth and ability to grapple with profound societal and existential questions, reflecting a broader shift towards a more inclusive understanding of literature’s role in holistic learning. However, while there is literature on the affordances of these genres in the context of Norwegian education (Kristin Ørjasæter, 2019; Penne, 2010), it is scarce.

The following section, '1.2 Aim and Research Question,' provides a comprehensive overview of the primary objectives and research questions that will guide the inquiry in this thesis. By determining the aims and specific questions driving the research, readers will gain insight into the overarching goals of the study and the key areas of focus that will be explored in subsequent chapters.

1.2 Aim and Research Questions

The Dispossessed was determined as an exemplary choice for holistically investigating the potential affordances of speculative-fiction literature in fostering learning and the development of Bildung; Le Guin's narrative, and her writing in general, is renowned for its intricate exploration of social, political, and philosophical themes within the backdrop of a meticulously constructed fictional universe (Robinson et al., 2021, p. 2). Through the story of *The Dispossessed*, chronicling physicist Shevek's journey between the contrasting worlds of Urras and Anarres, Le Guin explores questions of culture, freedom, equality, utopianism, and the complexities of human relationships. The novel's dual setting and presentation of contrasting social systems invites readers to critically examine the implications of political ideologies and societal structures. Furthermore, Le Guin's masterful storytelling and rich character development facilitate for readers' aesthetic engagement with the text prompting reflection, empathy, and imaginative exploration.

The aim of this research is to establish a theoretical foundation supporting the assertions that (1) the content of *The Dispossessed* represents knowledge that is highly relevant in contemporary society as well as for Norwegian 10th-grade English as a foreign language (EFL) pupils as expressed in the LK20 curriculum; and (2) that aesthetic engagement with fictional literature in general and that speculative fiction and Ursula K Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* in specific offer significant potential for holistic learning and development. To this end, three research questions are presented:

1. *To what extent can Bildung be said to be represented in Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed, as delineated by the intersection of a Bildung-theoretical perspective and the goals of the LK20 curriculum?*

This research question aims to establish a broad range of potential learning experiences based on the content of the novel. In order to make this feasible within the scope of the thesis, as

well as more relevant to the specific research context, this range is narrowed down to categories or areas of learning that can directly be linked to the LK20 in a Bildung-theoretical framework. By identifying and examining these categories, the research seeks to uncover the thematic, conceptual, and ethical dimensions of the novel that contribute to holistic learning and development.

The results of this research question (RQ1) serve as a necessary foundation for answering the next research question:

2. *How can aesthetic engagement with *The Dispossessed* benefit Norwegian 10th-grade EFL pupils in their learning and personal development, based on the potential avenues identified in response to Research Question 1?*

This question focuses on investigating the potential educational benefits of engaging aesthetically with *The Dispossessed* for 10th-grade Norwegian pupils studying English as a foreign language. More specifically, the research aims with this question to solidify the theoretical position of aesthetic reading by exploring how it can lead to deep-seated learning in the form of Bildung-experiences. In other words, RQ2 builds on and aims to elucidate the hypothesis that aesthetic engagement with literary fiction is conducive to Bildung-experiences.

As an addendum and bridge for incorporating the findings of RQ1 and RQ2 in future empirical research, the discussion chapter explores the possibility of utilizing the results of the analysis for a didactic model of Bildung through aesthetic reading:

3. *To what extent can the findings from Research Questions 1 and 2 inform a didactic model for promoting Bildung-experiences through aesthetic literary engagement?*

2.0 Theory

This chapter contains the theoretical framework of the thesis, primarily composed of Klafki's (2001) categorial theory of Bildung (originally presented in "Studien zur Bildungstheorie und Didaktik", 1959) and Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature in *Literature as Exploration* (1995). This section aims to elucidate their significance in working with *The Dispossessed* in the context of Norwegian primary education and the LK20.

Klafki and Rosenblatt were both well-known educators and developed their theories in didactic contexts. Furthermore, the two theories complement each other and are united in their holistic and dynamic integration of such pervasive yet elusive concepts as knowledge, art, learning, and being. As such, these theories also delineate the central positioning of this thesis.

'Section 2.1 Reader-Response Theory' introduces some central ideas and terminology for discussing engagement with fictional literature in a phenomenological context, constituting a theoretical understanding of the aesthetic reading. The section primarily presents Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature, but is supplemented by text-world theory (Neurohr & Stewart-Shaw, 2019).

'Section 2.2 Bildung' begins with a general introduction of the Bildung-concept, working towards Klafki's categorial theory and how it will be employed in the literary analysis of *The Dispossessed*. After presenting the essence of Klafki's theory, his conceived 'layers of Bildung' and 'fundamental categories' are more specifically discussed as analytical tools.

The theory chapter concludes with the section '2.3 Bildung in Education and the LK20'. Drawing on the understanding of Bildung established in the section preceding it, this section discusses the LK20's explicit and implicit understanding of Bildung, particularly in terms of intercultural competence and the interdisciplinary topic democracy and citizenship. The discussions presented here incorporate previous research on achieving Bildung through literature in educational contexts, ending with a discussion regarding practical implementation.

2.1 Reader Response Theory

Understanding how literature contributes to *Bildung* owes much to phenomenological literary theories such as reader-response theory and the more recent Text World Theory (TWT). In literary theory, reader-response criticism considers a work of literature as a dynamic interaction with the reader's experience, asserting that a text does not exist independently but comes to life through the act of reading. Jonathan Culler highlights this phenomenological view, stating that a literary work is "the experience of the reader" (Culler, 2011, p. 137). This approach underscores the role of the reader's imagination and background in creating meaning. This section presents Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature, which emphasizes the interaction between reader and text in creating meaning. As an addendum, Text World Theory (TWT) is discussed in closing as a more recent development in phenomenological literary theory that extends the concept of dynamic interaction.

2.1.1 Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory of Literature

There is no such thing as a generic reader or a generic literary work (...) A novel or poem or play remains merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols. (...) the reader infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols, and those symbols channel his thoughts and feelings. Out of this complex process emerges a more or less organized imaginative experience. (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 24)

Reader-response theory, as articulated by Rosenblatt, suggests that meaning in literature arises from the transaction between the reader and the text. This transaction, according to Rosenblatt, is not passive; rather, the reader plays an active role in meaning-making, he or she must "draw on his past experiences with life and language as the raw materials out of which to shape the new experience symbolized on the page." (1995, p. 25). Furthermore, the theory acknowledges the reader as "carrying on certain processes in nonliterary and literary transactions (...) [and that] both cognitive and affective elements are present in all reading" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. xvi). The concern of reader-response theory then, in the words of Rosenblatt, "[is] with social and psychological insights as they flower from the actual aesthetic experience (...)—sensuous, intellectual, emotional—out of which social insights may arise." (1995, p. 31). She defines aesthetic reading by an expansive attention or experience unto the text, characteristically including "the personal, affective aura and

associations surrounding the words evoked, and [the reader] must focus on—experience, live through—the moods, scenes, situations being created during the transaction (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. xvii). Rosenblatt’s aesthetic reading may be understood as literary immersion, which has been variously discussed as personal identification with or the feeling of transportation or absorption in a narrative (Stockwell, 2019, p. 17).

In this phenomenological perspective, a book is never only a thing in itself, representing some universal essence. Rather, a book represents the potential for literary aesthetic experience, which is not only as diverse as each reader of the work, but as diverse as each reader’s reading: “Memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 30) all influence and define the literary experience. Thus, at the heart of the theory is the idea of the text “as an event in the life of the reader, as a doing (...) fed by the coming together of a particular personality and a particular text at a particular time” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. xvi).

That experiencing art is subjective, however, should not be taken to mean that all readings are as insightful, or that a text cannot be analyzed for the presence of its author. The author, of course, must be thought to harbor something they wish to communicate—whether Wilde’s testament to aesthetics in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* or Vonnegut’s visceral rendering of trauma in *Slaughterhouse-Five*—and they utilize certain tools to accomplish it. Rosenblatt emphasizes that in order to attain a depth of engagement, the reader must “remain faithful to the author’s text (...), be alert to potential clues (...), and seek to organize or interpret such clues” (1995, p. 7). Initially, the reader’s experiences and personal assumptions form a preliminary framework for this interpretation. This process may lead the reader to overlook certain elements or mistakenly attribute ideas to the author that are not supported by the text. Recognizing these discrepancies, the reader may then need to adjust or expand their initial assumptions. Thus, “the teacher’s task is to foster fruitful interactions—or, more precisely, transactions—between individual readers and individual literary texts” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 25).

The Role of the Teacher

Literature treats the whole range of choices and aspirations and values out of which the individual must weave his own personal philosophy. The literary works that students are urged to read offer not only “literary” values (...) but also some approach to life, some image of people working out a common fate or some assertion that certain kinds

of experiences, certain modes of feeling, are valuable. The teacher who is aware of the potential absorption or rejection of social attitudes will be led to investigate his own role in the process. (Rosenblatt, 1995, pp. 19–20)

The respect for and appreciation of the reader's individual experience and the wish to facilitate a depth of engagement that stimulates social and ethical growth presents a tension. If for example the teacher employs fictional literature with the mind of illustrating some specific moral lesson, she may inadvertently de-value the pupils' individual experiences. Rosenblatt elaborates on the dual focus of literature that touches both aesthetic and social realms, pointing out that while the aesthetic and social contexts may be distinguished in theory, they are phenomenologically inseparable (1995, p. 23). In other words, to the reader aesthetically engaged, literature is always both art and a medium that fosters social growth through engagement with human experiences and moral attitudes. She argues for a balanced approach to literary study, advocating for the acknowledgment of both the aesthetic and social elements of literary experience: "Since to lead the student to ignore either the aesthetic or the social elements of his experience is to cripple him for a fruitful understanding of what literature offers" (1995, p. 30). This balance is crucial in allowing students to reap the full benefits of literature—exploring the human condition through the lens of artistic expression. This holistic approach is essential in fostering a deep appreciation of literature's role in personal and societal development. As pupils engage with literary works, they not only encounter diverse perspectives but also refine their interpretive skills and emotional responses, leading to a richer, more nuanced understanding of both themselves and the world around them. Thus, "teaching becomes a matter of improving the individual's capacity to evoke meaning from the text by leading him to reflect self-critically on this process" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 25).

2.1.2 Text-world Theory

A theoretical framework that is particularly intriguing when discussing fictional narratives, is that of Text World Theory (TWT). TWT provides terminology to understand how readers construct rich mental representations, known as 'text worlds,' through their engagement with literature. This framework is particularly suited for analyzing speculative fiction, which often requires readers to actively imagine and build complex worlds distinct from their everyday reality.

Building on phenomenological principles, TwT describes how readers engage with fictional worlds constructed within literary texts (Neurohr & Stewart-Shaw, 2019, pp. 1–2). By defining fictional worlds as mental constructs shaped by readers' engagement with texts,

TWT acknowledges the cognitive processes involved in constructing and interpreting literary narratives, focusing on the embodied nature of reading and the immersive experiences readers encounter when engaging with fictional worlds (Stockwell, 2019). TWT's focus on the reader's construction of fictional worlds allows for a nuanced examination of how Le Guin's narrative prompts readers to create and engage with the contrasting societies presented in the novel, enriching their understanding of complex social and political structures.

At the core of TWT, as expounded by Werth and further developed by Gavins, is the notion that reading is an immersive experience, grounded in the cognitive processes of world-building and world-navigating (Neurohr & Stewart-Shaw, 2019). Like in Rosenblatt's transactional theory, these processes are not passive; they require the reader to engage dynamically with the text, pulling from their reservoir of knowledge and experience to breathe life into the words on the page. This interaction is deeply embodied, reflecting the reader's inherent ability to map textual cues to their understanding of reality, however altered it may be by the narrative.

In the analysis of Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, Text World Theory (TWT) complements Rosenblatt's transactional theory by providing a structured approach to understanding how readers engage with the novel's rich narrative landscapes. While Rosenblatt's theory emphasizes the personal and emotive interaction between the reader and the text, TWT offers a systematic way to dissect how readers construct and navigate the complex worlds of Anarres and Urras. This dual approach allows for a nuanced analysis of how individual readers' perceptions and interpretations of the text worlds influence their understanding of the novel's social and political themes. The analysis will employ TWT alongside Rosenblatt's framework to examine the cognitive processes readers use to synthesize these fictional worlds with their personal experiences and societal views.

2.2 Bildung

Klafki explains that the term Bildung has been understood in German pedagogic thinking since the 19th century as a central category to characterize and determine the goals of upbringing (2001, p. 168), which “meant above all the awakening of self-determined moral responsibility, a readiness for moral action, and the capacity for moral action” (Klafki, 2001, p. 96).

Bildung emerged as a theoretical concept in German ethical and aesthetic thought in conjunction with Romanticism in the early 19th century, drawing inspiration from humanist ideals and emphasizing the cultivation of the individual's intellectual, moral, and aesthetic capacities (Herdt, 2021). The Bildung-theoretical formulations of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1903/2016; 1999) contributed to Bildung becoming a central ideal in German educational discourse at the start of the 19th century (Horlacher, 2014, p. 36). Many scholars contributed to the development of theoretical Bildung, including influential figures like Hegel and Goethe (Herdt, 2021), and several perspectives emerged. Notably, the material-Bildung and formal-Bildung traditions represented a polarity between emphasis on encyclopedic objectivism and subjective development respectively (Hohr, 2011, pp. 164–165). This opposition, discussed further in the following section, became the outset for Klafki's categorial theory (2001).

For now, what is mutual to these perspectives is that they approach Bildung as (1) a process, describing how Bildung occurs and how to facilitate this in individual experience; and (2) in terms of idealistic goals, discussing what the pertinent content of Bildung is for a thriving society and the betterment of humankind (Sjöström & Eilks, 2020). The former (1) is further presented primarily in the following section 2.2.1 and subsequently the latter (2) in section 2.3.

In the following section, Klafki's categorial theory (2001) is discussed as a comprehensive yet practically applicable understanding of Bildung. In conjunction with presenting the essence of Klafki's theory, some of the notions of his theory, notably the exemplary, the elementary, and the fundamental, are discussed in more detail as an analytical tool for exploring the learning potential of aesthetic engagement with *The Dispossessed*. Lastly, the presence of Bildung in Norwegian education and the LK20 is discussed further, particularly in relation to the interdisciplinary topic democracy and citizenship and the English subject-specific topic intercultural competence.

2.2.1 Klafki's Categorial Theory of Bildung

This section presents a brief account of Klafki's conception of the essence of Bildung as a process, before expounding on this process with the 'layers' of Bildung which are also used to determine the learning-material's capacity to induce Bildung-experiences. More specifically, the double-sided opening is presented as the essence of the process of Bildung; the three layers exemplary, elementary, and fundamental are presented as layers that the learning-material must adhere to in order to facilitate the double-sided opening; and four higher order areas of Bildung, the fundamental, are presented as the main analytical categories of goals for

The Dispossessed. In concluding the section, Bildung and the four aforementioned areas are discussed in comparison with the LK20.

What distinguishes Klafki's conception of Bildung, and which is central to the arguments of this thesis, is his holistic synthesis of the objective and subjective elements of the previously distinct formal- and material- Bildung traditions. The material Bildung-theories focused on the content of cultural heritage, such as scientific knowledge and the ethical and aesthetic ideals of the literary canon. In contrast, formal Bildung theories emerged partly as a reaction to the rapid expansion of knowledge and the encyclopedic nature of material theories, which struggled to justify the selection of specific content. Formal theorists argue that the true essence of Bildung lies in developing the individual's abilities and methodological skills (for example the scientific method), which they argued as universalizable to new content and contexts (Straum, 2018, pp. 33–35).

When Klafki in 1959 presented his categorial theory of Bildung in “Studien zur Bildungstheorie und Didaktik”, Klafki addressed the lack of a coherent and in-depth description of the ‘being of Bildung’ in these earlier theories, explaining that they, while holding limited notions of truth, ultimately fail in adequately delineating an essence of Bildung as well as in practical-pedagogic situations (2001, p. 186). In particular, he problematized the material and formal theories’ respective preoccupation with either the objective or the subjective at the exclusion of the other, writing that only notions of Bildung that consider the isolated perspectives of formal and material Bildung in a dialectic frame of thinking can interpret the essence of Bildung adequately (2001, p. 187). In other words, that the intrinsic value of both the individual and of their culture must not only be accepted, but also understood as mutually dependent. Klafki tried to solve this division of the subjective and objective in his categorial theory with his conception of the double-sided opening.

The Double-Sided Opening

Klafki defines the essence of Bildung as that phenomenon which through the aid of we immediately can experience the unity between an objective and a subjective element (2001, p. 192). This is also what he terms the double-sided opening, referring to the opening of the objective in the sense of the world revealing itself to the pupil in its workings, principles, and patterns, and the simultaneous opening of the subjective, the individual's fundamental acceptance of this new piece of the world into their inner world. The objective opening alone may be called acquisition of knowledge, but without a simultaneous and sufficient opening of

the subject in return, it is not Bildung; knowledge acquisition is only Bildung when the knowledge takes home in the pupil's horizons of questioning and understanding of self and world, contributing to their sense of purpose and value in the future as well as the moment in a way that extends beyond pragmatic application (Klafki, 2001, p. 189). It follows that what it means for the subject to open is the deep-seated acceptance of new knowledge, integrating with the pupils' cognitive frameworks that they use to organize and interpret information from their environment, influencing their ways of thinking, being, or perceiving the world (Klafki, 2001, p. 193).

Having established that the essence of Bildung is whatever facilitates this double-sided opening, the next step is to answer the questions what is characteristic of the individual that opens? What is characteristic of the content? Some immediately apparent answers to the former question, which pertains primarily to RQ2, can include willingness to learn as well as the ability to learn, for example in terms of motivation, health, a positive learning environment, and self-efficacy and scaffolding. The latter question is the one that is most central to this thesis, touching on all three research questions, the content being Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed*. In answering this question, Klafki presents various 'elements' or 'layers' that the content must adhere to. Since Klafki's own terminology throughout his writings is, as Olav Straum points out, inconsistent (2018, p. 37) and often relies on well-established German terminology that it is assumed the reader is familiar with (2018, p. 41), this thesis adheres to Straum's disambiguation of Klafki's terminology, using 'the exemplary', 'the elementary', and 'the fundamental' to describe the layers of Bildung that content must adhere to in order to facilitate Bildung-experiences through the double-sided opening. In the following sections, the fundamental layer and the relevant fundamental categories are presented, before discussing how the three layers of the exemplary, the elementary, and the fundamental function to determine whether and how learning-material facilitate Bildung-experiences.

The Fundamental Layer

The fundamental, *grundrichtungen*, is the deepest layer of Bildung. The fundamental describes a general area of knowledge that has distinct terminology, principles, methods, and ethos, for example the natural sciences, which Klafki frequently references (2001, p. 187). In his dissertation, Klafki proposed twelve fundamental categories (Klafki, 1964, p. 332, as cited in Straum, 2018, p. 42). Within the span of this thesis, four fundamental categories are

discussed. These categories are particularly pertinent due to their strong resonance with the narrative of *The Dispossessed* and the context of investigating the aesthetic dimension of literature. These categories are: (1) Bildung of aesthetics and literature; (2) Philosophical existential Bildung; (3) Bildung of language and culture; and (4) Social-ethical Bildung.

In adapting Klafki's framework, 'music' has been omitted from “*musisch-ästhetische Bildung*” to streamline the focus to ‘Bildung of aesthetics and literature’. This omission is solely for the purpose of this thesis’s scope and not a reflection of the category's broader applications. Similarly, ‘literary’ has been integrated into ‘Bildung of aesthetics and literature’ to emphasize the aesthetic exploration of literature, which is a primary concern of this thesis. This adaptation acknowledges Klafki’s perspective that fundamental categories should evolve in response to ongoing didactic research and the changing landscape of education (Straum, 2018, p. 43).

The forthcoming analysis will showcase how *The Dispossessed* not only serves as a compelling narrative but also as a profound educational experience. Each of the selected fundamental categories of Bildung will be examined through Le Guin's narrative, elucidating how her novel contributes to a Bildung-rich educational process. This in-depth exploration will illustrate how literature, particularly speculative fiction, can be instrumental in the cultivation of a reflective and deeply engaged individual, as envisioned in both Klafki's theory and the LK20 curriculum. In other words, these four categories become the focal point for answering RQ1, ‘*To what extent can Bildung be said to be represented in Ursula K. Le Guin’s The Dispossessed (...)*’. The Bildung of aesthetics and literature focuses on the narrative elements that evoke artistic beauty, as well as the accompanying phenomenological experiences of engaging with the literary form.

When exploring philosophical existential Bildung, key existential themes such as freedom, justice, and the pursuit of meaning emerge. The analysis will examine how characters in *The Dispossessed* navigate these philosophical landscapes and how their journeys can prompt readers to reflect on similar concepts within their personal and societal realms.

In the context of Bildung of language and culture, literature serves as a vehicle not just for communication, but also as a means of cultural expression and identity formation. The linguistic nuances and cultural dimensions present in *The Dispossessed* provide a rich tapestry for analyzing the interplay between language, culture, and society, thus facilitating a broader understanding of intercultural competencies.

Finally, social-ethical Bildung involves examining ethical considerations and societal commentaries. *The Dispossessed* bring ethical dilemmas and social structures into question, offering an avenue to explore values such as social justice, equality, and personal responsibility. Consequently, literature becomes a lens through which ethical awareness and critical social consciousness can be developed.

The Bildung-Developing Content

In Klafki's conceptualization, Bildung as a process is structured in progressive layers that describe the character and depth of a Bildung-experience. These layers, the exemplary, the elementary, and the fundamental, are important criteria for determining whether educational content is Bildung-developing (Straum, 2018, pp. 37–38).

The exemplary (also termed the typical, the representative, and the elementary by Klafki (2001, p. 187)) is the pregnant, concrete didactic example. In Klafki's framework, the exemplary is not merely a specific instance confined to a narrow topic, such as a single historical event or a particular mathematical problem. Instead, it is *open* in the sense that it has a normative or categorial character that may lead the learner to broader principles and deeper insights. For instance, studying the fall of the Berlin Wall is not just about learning the events of 1989; it's an entry point into the wider themes of political change, freedom, and the human desire for unity, themes that reach far beyond the specifics of the event itself. As Klafki writes, the exemplary is that example which opens from the everyday to the alien; from a simple experience to the construction of an idea (2001, p. 187).

The example is pointing beyond itself to a more complex understanding of reality. More specifically, that which the exemplary points to is what is termed 'the elementary'; the higher order terms, values, and methods of the fundamental categories that the given example belongs to.

The layers of exemplary, elementary, and fundamental describe the character and depth of a Bildung-experience and are presented as hierarchic: the fundamental is reached through the elementary, which in turn is reached through the exemplary. In other words, all content that facilitates the fundamental also adheres to the elementary and is exemplary, but content that is exemplary may vary in ability to facilitate the attainment of the layers of elementary and fundamental Bildung. Based on the example Klafki employs in *Studien* (2001, p. 187), the relationships of these layers can be presented as following:

1. The exemplary layer represents the initial stage where a concrete example is used to elicit curiosity and inquiry. For instance, pupils throwing stones at varying forces discover that the more force applied, the longer it takes for the stone to hit the ground, leading them to explore further.
2. The elementary layer involves a more abstract and higher-order understanding of concepts. In this stage, pupils learn about the concepts of gravity, inertia, and orbital dynamics. They understand how these forces interact to create the continuous motion of celestial bodies like the moon.
3. Finally, the fundamental layer represents the stage where students grasp the ethos of a fundamental category. The example of throwing stones ultimately transcends the mechanics of the moon's orbit, achieving a profound realization of the universal laws of physics.

As mentioned in the previous section, *Bildung* has occurred when knowledge takes home in the pupil's horizons of questioning and understanding of self and world, influencing their ways of thinking, being, or perceiving the world (Klafki, 2001, pp. 189, 193). This happens in the layers of the elementary and the fundamental, as elicited by the exemplary. Reaching the layer of the elementary means a higher order understanding of the fundamental category through central terms and concepts, a deeper understanding of gravity in the above example, or, in the realm of literature, understanding a text's ability to communicate through written language via narrative, characterization, themes, settings, etc.

Attaining the fundamental layer represents the most profound *Bildung* experience, where the core ethos of a domain is internalized, cultivating a mindset and attitude in pupils that resonates with the spirit of the subject. Such an impact operates on both cognitive and emotional levels (*Gesinnung/Haltung*), fostering not only a mode of thinking but also an inspired disposition toward the subject-matter. For instance, in literature, achieving a fundamental *Bildung* experience transcends basic literary analysis; it instills an appreciation for literature as an embodiment of the human spirit's capacity for creativity and expression. Using Klafki's expressions, a deep-seated understanding of what literature *is*; that it comes over the pupil as a fantastic opportunity and invention made possible by the human spirit, an experience that may awaken a lasting interest in the subject (2001, p. 190).

Concluding the *Bildung*-Theoretical Framework

In conclusion, the preceding discussions presented Klafki's categorial theory of *Bildung* and adapted it to a suitable framework for analyzing and discussing *The Dispossessed*. By

synthesizing the objective and subjective dimensions of formal and material Bildung traditions, Klafki offers a comprehensive understanding of Bildung as a process characterized by the double-sided opening—an integration of the objective world and the subjective individual. This holistic perspective underscores the interconnectedness of individual development and cultural heritage, emphasizing the mutual dependence between the two. Through the layers of Bildung—exemplary, elementary, and fundamental—I will explore how *The Dispossessed* can facilitate Bildung, from the concrete didactic examples that open pathways to deeper understanding (exemplary) to the higher-order conceptualizations of fundamental categories that shape cognitive and emotional attitudes (fundamental).

In essence, Bildung transcends mere acquisition of knowledge; it represents a transformative journey towards self-realization and societal engagement. The following section explores the role of Bildung in Norwegian education and its alignment with the LK20 curriculum.

2.3 Bildung in Norwegian Education and the LK20

One of the goals of this thesis is to establish how the Bildung-related content of *The Dispossessed* can be understood in didactic and idealistic relation to the official outlines of the LK20. Therefore, this section discusses how Bildung/*danning* is understood in Norwegian education today as expressed in previous research and the Core Curriculum and the subject-specific curriculum for English for The National curriculum for the Knowledge Promotion 2020 (the LK20).

The section begins with a short discussion of the historical context of Bildung in Norway, before establishing how this term is understood in the LK20 and what aspects of the LK20's explicit and implicit descriptions of Bildung are most relevant to this thesis and *The Dispossessed*. The outset for establishing what is most relevant is based on the four fundamental categories discussed in section 2.1.2, which in turn were chosen based on their relevance to the aesthetic research context and the content of *The Dispossessed*. The Bildung-related content of the LK20 deemed most apt in this framework is the interdisciplinary topic democracy and citizenship and the English subject-specific topic intercultural competence. In closing, the section discusses the role of the teacher in active implementation of Bildung.

2.3.1 Historical Context

Whereas the theory chapter focused on Bildung as process, this section focuses on Bildung as goal. A central dimension of Bildung as a goal, especially in the context of curriculum-work, is *Allgemeinbildung* (*folkedanning*) or ‘Bildung for everyone’. Allgemeinbildung simultaneously describe the educational institution’s responsibility toward the development of (1) the individual pupil, for example as summarized by the ideal of differentiated instruction; and (2) society as a whole (Hohr, 2011, pp. 169–170).

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, influenced by the German Romantic movement and developments in the educational sciences, *folkedanning* (*allgemeinbildung*) or Bildung for everyone, became a prominent democratic principle in the Norwegian political and educational reformation; education became the primary institution for the formation of citizens to qualified democratic participants (Dale, 2003, p. 156). This period marked the beginning of major educational reforms, leading to the eventual establishment of *enhetsskolen* (unity school) and the modern understanding of educational institutions as an organic whole that educates all pupils regardless of status or background (Dale, 2003, p. 155). As Dale (2003, p. 182) points out, however, while these institutions were conceived with a Bildung-humanist approach to pedagogy, they also aligned with governmental aims of standardization and control, which sometimes contradicted the reformist pedagogical goals. As discussed in the introduction, and to be continued in implementation below, this tension persists (Federici & Skaalvik, 2017, p. 186, as cited in Befring, 2018, p. 53).

From then until now, Bildung has existed in varying forms and to varying degrees in Norwegian curricula and pedagogical practice, and the term was employed in several studies of Kunnskapsløftet and its curriculum of 2006 (Telhaug, 2011, p. 215). The pedagogical understanding of Bildung has varied greatly and several distinct theoretical perspectives, notably material/formal, have been emphasized throughout Norwegian educational history. Over the two past decades of Scandinavian and Norwegian educational discourse, Bildung, and notably Klafki’s categorial theory has undergone a resurgence (Straum, 2018) and attained considerable prominence in teacher education curricula (Hohr, 2011, p. 164). The following sections discuss exactly how this is manifest in the content of the LK20, and how this content is relevant to the analysis of *The Dispossessed*.

2.3.2 In the LK20 (The Bildung-ideal)

The primary focus in discussing the LK20 is of Bildung as “an outline and the critical discussion of the general as that which concerns us all in our epoch” (Westbury et al., 1999, p. 104). In other words, the LK20’s active delineation of the Bildung-ideal through its presented goals. The opening lines in the Core Curriculum’s “Principles for education and all-round development” broadly summarize the concept of Bildung as described in the preceding sections:

The school's mission is the education and all-round development (Bildung) of all pupils. Education and all-round development are interlinked and mutually dependent (...). Primary and secondary education and training is an important part of a lifelong process which has the individual's all-round development, intellectual freedom, independence, responsibility and compassion for others as its goal. (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 10)

Regarding exactly how to promote “all-round development, intellectual freedom, independence, responsibility and compassion for others”, however, the Curriculum does not provide much answer. As previously discussed, Bildung has often been characterized as a fuzzy concept (Straum, 2018, p. 31). Therefore, while there is consensus that the LK20 generally promotes Bildung, it is also agreed that, for better (Bergheim, 2024) or worse (Fauskevåg, 2022), it also leaves a lot of room for interpretation.

The term Bildung has a long historical and cultural tradition. Horlacher writes that “the terms “education,” “instruction,” “training,” “forming,” or “upbringing” do not even come close to the cultural ambition in the semantics of *Bildung*” (2014, p. 36). In Norway, *danning* is often used synonymous to Bildung, as seen in translations of Klafki (Klafki, 2001) and research like that of Dale (2003) and Hohr (2011). However, while the LK20’s Core Curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017) mentions *danning* more than twenty times, its official English translation only includes the term Bildung twice (as seen in the above quote). For other mentions of *danning*, translations include “formation,” “development as/for human beings,” and “all-round development” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, pp. 1, 2, 5). Considering the challenges around the concept (Bergheim, 2024, p. 92; Fauskevåg, 2022, p. 109; Straum, 2018, p. 31) this analysis interprets all relevant references in the LK20 as Bildung and acknowledges the curriculum's implicit discussions of it.

The LK20 curriculum, while recognizing the importance of Bildung, provides only a vague and broadly defined understanding of the concept. This ambiguity leaves significant

room for interpretation, challenging educators to discern how to meaningfully integrate Bildung into their teaching. Therefore, this discussion of the LK20's Bildung content relies on the structured framework outlined in the preceding sections.

Following, the LK20's implicit delineation of a Bildung-ideal is discussed in terms of democratic citizenship, intercultural competence, and identity, creativity, and the urge to explore.

Democracy and Citizenship

The concept of Bildung is closely tied to the concept of society. This can be viewed from the perspective of society's responsibility to the individual; whether society realizes humanistic ideals such as personal autonomy and solidarity, and from the perspective of the individual's responsibility to society; to constitute and influence society through active participation (Hohr, 2011, p. 169). These perspectives are key in the LK20's discussions of democracy and citizenship, with active participation, autonomy, and solidarity being central in the core curriculum. In the English subject curriculum, democracy and citizenship primarily promotes solidarity through intercultural competence (IC), which will be discussed along with other mentions of IC in the following section.

The core curriculum states that Democracy and citizenship as an interdisciplinary topic shall “develop an understanding of the relationship between individual rights and obligations (...), [and] stimulate the pupils to become active citizens” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 16). For achieving such goals, Breivega et al. emphasize the importance of experiencing lived democracy in the classroom, and that such experience arises when pupils engage with authentic and often controversial issues (2019, p. 22). Nussbaum (2006) extends this argument, emphasizing that cultivating a broad range of abilities through humanities and the arts is essential for nurturing democratic citizens who can question authority and reason critically (2006, pp. 387–388). To develop these skills, she insists that pedagogical approaches must balance content mastery with imaginative and creative thinking. The teacher is challenged to create a class-environment in which disagreement does not degenerate to polarization and anger but is rather met with empathy, tolerance and reasoned debate. As will be explored through *The Dispossessed* in the analysis section, fictional literature offers a promising approach, as it allows pupils to explore sensitive social and ethical matters in a non-confrontational way, facilitating constructive debate and fostering tolerance (Syed et al., 2021, p. 54).

Intercultural Competence

Klafki points out that solidarity is a logical prerequisite for individual and societal freedom (as cited in Hohn, 2011, p. 169). This sentiment is visible in the LK20's discussion of democracy and citizenship in the subject-specific English curriculum, in that it is closely tied to the concept of intercultural competence (IC):

In the English subject, the interdisciplinary topic of democracy and citizenship refers to helping the pupils to develop their understanding of the fact that the way they view the world is culture dependent (...), experience different societies and cultures by communicating with others around the world (...), [and] open for new ways to interpret the world, and promote curiosity and engagement and help to prevent prejudices. (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3)

Matos & Melo-Pfeifer (2020) and Nussbaum (2006) emphasize the role of literature and the arts in cultivating the curiosity, engagement, and deep understanding that the LK20 curriculum seeks to promote. By engaging with arts and storytelling, pupils may gain intercultural competence and better understand their cultural biases and obligations as citizens. Literature becomes a tool for understanding diverse perspectives and building the tolerance necessary for reasoned debate in the classroom.

Nussbaum emphasizes the importance of critical examination, global and national citizenship, and imaginative empathy in education. Critical examination requires pupils to challenge their beliefs and traditions through dialogue, cultivating logical reasoning and independent thought. This capacity aligns with the LK20's emphasis on helping pupils understand that their worldview is culturally dependent. Nussbaum further argues for education that encourages pupils to view themselves as global citizens while recognizing differences across cultural, religious, and societal lines. "An adequate education for living in a pluralistic democracy must be a multicultural education," (2006, p. 390) she writes, advocating for a curriculum that encourages critical thinking about diverse narratives. Literature, storytelling, and the arts cultivate empathy by allowing pupils "to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have" (2006, p. 390). The positive impact of fictional literature on empathy is corroborated by various studies (Bal & Veltkamp, 2013; McGillis, 2006; White, 2015); through experimental research, Kidd and Castano present that "the brain responds to emotions in fiction exactly as if it were real life" (2013, as cited in Dypedahl & Lund, 2020, p. 78).

Matos and Melo-Pfeifer build on these ideas by emphasizing the transformative power of arts in fostering intercultural competence. Engaging with the arts provides pupils with the tools to develop empathy and address systemic failures like social injustice and climate change. The arts allow pupils to “detox” from polarized information environments and embrace deep reading practices, which facilitate critical analysis and empathy. They promote the immersion that art offers, writing that in order to “translate theoretical principles, and discussions, into transformative social action, (...) an experiential dimension (...) should be an integral element to help students reflect, construct knowledge, imagine, and function as a catalyst to promote change.” (Matos & Melo-Pfeifer, 2020, p. 294). Thus, as will be discussed in the analysis of *The Dispossessed*, literature represents a way to promote IC by immersing readers in characters and settings that challenge their preformed notions of self, other, and society.

Implementation: Bildung in Practice

Fauskevåg (2022) argues that while the LK20 curriculum's portrayal of Bildung is aspirational, it lacks the concrete framework needed for effective implementation, leaving a gap between educational ideals and practice. Others yet disagree with Fauskevåg, such as Bergheim, who purports that Bildung is beneficial to curriculum work precisely because its signifiers are empty, and no definite agreement can be reached about its content, writing that “the dangers of the curriculum attempting to say too much about the content of Bildung are just as great, if not greater, than the dangers of saying too little” (2024, p. 92). Instead, the responsibility is put on the individual teacher to effectively mediate between Bildung and their pupils. As Befring (2018, p. 54) points out, individual districts, schools, and teachers have through freedom of management been able, to varying degrees, to move beyond competition-based goal-orientation and the encyclopedic tradition. He also highlights, however, that the centrally governed content, system of assessment, and current political discourse on education show that goal-orientation and the encyclopedic tradition prevalently inform the understanding of schooling as a concept.

This thesis positions itself with Bergheim in that keeping the signifiers of Bildung empty is crucial for the flexibility it offers teachers in interpreting and applying these concepts within their unique classroom contexts. This open approach allows educators to bridge the gap between ideals and practical implementation, adapting the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of their pupils. As prominent didactic scholar Erich Weniger aptly puts it:

The guarantors (...) [of Bildung] are never the institutions and curricula themselves (...) but living human beings who feel responsible for both the state and education. In curricula, the state gives (...) people the opportunity of showing the young its worth, and whoever wishes to serve the state and at the same time provide a truly worthwhile education must adapt themselves to this objective structure. (Weniger, 1999, p. 120)

Research on whether Norwegian primary education teachers are successful in promoting Bildung is scarce. A recent study on Norwegian 10th-grade pupils' experiences of Bildung, however, find that "the pupils in our study experience that Bildung is not pursued deliberately and visibly" (Stubhaug & Tahirsylaj, 2024, p. 292). The authors make no definitive claims for why this is, but speculate on the impact of OECD's recommendations to focus on knowledge and the use of tests, indicating the need for further research.

Concluding the section on Bildung in the LK20, the curriculum embraces an aspirational concept of Bildung, promoting democracy and citizenship and intercultural competence while leaving its exact interpretation open. In the perspective of Weniger, educators are empowered to tailor these ideals to their unique classroom contexts. Nonetheless, if teachers fail to promote Bildung in practice, whether because teachers feel pressured in preparing pupils for standardized testing, or for the lack of a concrete framework as Fauskevåg (2022) argues, attention should be paid to how Norwegian primary school teachers can be equipped and encouraged to promote Bildung in their classrooms.

3.0 Method and Material

This chapter outlines the research approach and methods employed to address the research questions posed in this thesis. It details the rationale behind the chosen methodology and provides a detailed description of the steps undertaken to conduct the study. By combining qualitative textual analysis with a Bildung-theoretical framework, the aim is to present a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the educational potential inherent in aesthetic engagement with *The Dispossessed* as described by the research questions.

This study seeks to understand the process of knowledge formation during aesthetic engagement by mapping and understanding some of the various elements that constitutes the whole. Given the holistic and phenomenological connotations inherent in concepts such as Bildung and aesthetic reading, a qualitative approach is deemed suitable. Indeed, the wording of the research questions places the present thesis firmly in the tradition of literary analysis as method. Consequently, the qualitative method of close textual reading is a central constituent of both the collection and analysis of data.

The first section presents qualitative methodology and why it is relevant for the present study in more detail. Following, close textual reading is presented as the method of collection. The section on close textual reading presents the four fundamental categories of Bildung and corresponding areas of LK20 as the main analytical categories for *The Dispossessed*. In conclusion, this chapter will reflect on the validity and reliability of the thesis methodology

3.1 Qualitative Methodology

The choice of qualitative methodology for this thesis stems from the nature of the research questions, which require a deep exploration of theoretical concepts and a literary analysis. As mentioned, the concepts of aesthetics and Bildung are hardly quantifiable. Rather, as discussed in the theory section, they are elusive to even qualitative definition. Furthermore, because the nature of the present research implicitly and explicitly positions the thesis in the research tradition of literary analysis as method, the methodology is necessarily qualitative: as Markussen writes, the object of literary research lies between observable language signs and the creation of meaning in the mind of the reader (2013, p. 23). In other words, literary analysis is inherently descriptive and interpretive, a central characteristic of qualitative research (Mackey & Gass, 2012, pp. 181–182) aiming to generate rich description,

interpreting their significance in the context of the larger issues that are the context of the research.

Qualitative research, in this context, involves the interpretation and analysis of texts and theoretical frameworks to uncover underlying meanings and patterns. More specifically, a literary analysis of *The Dispossessed* in a Bildung-theoretical framework. Common to all literary analyses is that the researcher must read the fictional text attentively (2013). In other words, to engage in the methodological tradition of a close textual reading. A central aspect of analyzing fictional literature is to engage with the aesthetic qualities and the poetic language function of the text (Kallestad & Røskeland, 2020, p. 46).

The research operates in a theoretical context, and as such does not involve experiments or participants in the traditional sense. Instead, it focuses on the exploration and interpretation of *The Dispossessed*, theoretical frameworks, and existing literature to generate insights and understanding. This is achieved by employing literary and didactic theory as frameworks applied in a close textual reading and subsequent discussion of *The Dispossessed*. The qualitative approach thus allows for an in-depth exploration of complex theoretical concepts and their hypothetical application to real-world contexts.

The subsequent sections will present the specific qualitative methods employed in the data collection and analysis. These methods will enable a comprehensive examination of the novel's content, theoretical underpinnings, and their implications for Norwegian 10th-grade English as a foreign language pupils.

3.1.1 Data Collection and Analysis – Close Textual Reading

The research design for this study adopts as mentioned a qualitative approach, aiming to explore and understand the elements of Bildung in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and how 10th-grade Norwegian English as a foreign language (EFL) pupils can benefit from an aesthetic reading of the text. The primary method of both data collection and analysis involves a literary analysis of *The Dispossessed*.

A literary analysis involves a thorough investigation of the text, in order to describe, explain, and understand it (Kallestad & Røskeland, 2020, p. 47). This implies a close textual reading, which is considered to be essential for literary studies (Smith, 2016). Smith defines close textual reading as “a technically informed, fine-grained analysis of some piece of writing, usually in connection with some broader question of interest” (2016, p. 17). In a close reading of an epic text, the literary scholar systematically addresses the aesthetic devices that illuminate the theme of the text. This involves examining the narrative technique and

narrator's position and showing with examples from the text how these are significant for composition and structure, the curve of tension, character and environment descriptions, style, and language (Kallestad & Røskeland, 2020, p. 50). In this case, the analysis of the language, structure, and context of *The Dispossessed* is related to a Bildung-theoretical didactic perspective and the LK20: what elements of the novel can be considered exemplary, and what is the potential of its exemplary content to induce Bildung-experiences? Grounded in the analysis, the discussion will then hypothesize on the impact of such experiences for the individual pupil and educational practices.

Kallestad and Røskeland (2020, p. 48) explain that close textual reading may be applied in context-oriented approaches, author-oriented approaches, and reader-oriented approaches. The present thesis employs a mix of context- and reader-orientation, the former concerning the texts relationship with society and culture and the latter with the phenomenological process of reading and the creation of meaning (2020, p. 48). In this case, the context is represented by education as a social didactic institution, and the reader by the Norwegian EFL pupil. This method facilitates a nuanced understanding of the text and its implications, providing insights for analysis and interpretation.

This entails a preliminary close textual reading of *The Dispossessed* that identified the relevant fundamental categories, which are elaborated on in the section below. These are then applied in a Bildung-oriented close textual reading as presented by the analysis section. The following section presents the details of how this will be executed.

Bildung-Oriented Close Textual Reading

A preliminary close reading of *The Dispossessed* suggests structuring the analysis around four fundamental categories of Bildung that resonate with the principles, goals, and competency aims of the LK20 curriculum. The four fundamental categories will be related to the content of *The Dispossessed* as discussed in the theory chapter. As a benefit to the reader, they are also summarized here as following:

- (1) Bildung of aesthetics and literature. This category is twofold, focusing on:
 - The novel as art and phenomenological aesthetic experience of engaging with literature and its potential personal impact.
 - The source material's narrative treatment of art and beauty, particularly the merging of art and science throughout Shevek's character arc.

- (2) Philosophical existential Bildung. This category pertains to the philosophical and existential themes present in the novel, such as freedom, justice, and the search for meaning. In particular, Shevek's deep introspection, philosophical conversations on life, art, and science, culminating in his radical autonomy.
- (3) Bildung of language and culture. This category explores the role of language and culture in shaping individual identity and societal dynamics. This category focuses on Shevek as an anthropological observer, as he navigates the cultural differences of Urras and Anarres.
- (4) Social-ethical Bildung. This category focuses on the ethical dimensions of the novel, including issues of social justice, equality, and ethical responsibility. Again, this is expressed by Shevek's relationship experiences in two societies with radically different political and societal structures.

In short, these four categories are examined in the analysis section, and phenomenological literary theory is employed to hypothesize how the content of the novel through aesthetic engagement can be translated to Bildung-experiences in terms of the exemplary, elementary and fundamental layers of Bildung. The arguments of the analysis are also discussed in relation to the Bildung-oriented goals of the LK20, chiefly democracy and citizenship and intercultural competence.

It bears mentioning that a comprehensive exposition of each category through Le Guin's work is not possible given the constraints of this thesis. Instead, the analysis will focus on select examples that succinctly illustrate the intersection of the novel's themes with the Bildung-oriented goals of the LK20 curriculum. These examples have been chosen not only for their direct relevance to the educational context but also for their potential to catalyze meaningful discussions and insights among Norwegian 10th-grade EFL pupils. It is important to acknowledge that while these instances are illustrative, they represent only a fraction of the novel's capacity to contribute to the Bildung process and personal development of the learners.

3.2 Selection and Material

Because the contribution of this thesis lies in its exploration of how pupils can learn and develop through aesthetic engagement with fictional literature, it is natural to pose the question, why this novel in particular? While this question is subject to the analysis chapter

through the research questions, this section presents the initial rationale for choosing to work with this novel.

3.2.1 Why Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*?

Ursula K. Le Guin's legacy in the literary world is profound. The extent of scholarly examination of her work reflects her stature, with numerous studies on her contributions to utopian speculative fiction, anthropocentric narratives, and decoloniality. As the recent book *The Legacies of Ursula K. Le Guin: Science, Fiction, Ethics* outlines, her substantial body of work engages with themes such as climate change, overexploitation of natural resources, imperialist and colonial continuations, military conflicts, and racial and gender oppression (Robinson et al., 2021, pp. 2–3). It is for Le Guin's depth of treatment of critical questions and her ability to communicate these that her name stands out when examining the impact of fictional literature on the reader's development. Her engagement with cultural anthropology, reflected in her use of anthropologists or cultural observers as central figures in many narratives, injects a depth of socio-cultural exploration into her stories. Le Guin's feminist views and her advocacy for a spectrum of gender and sexuality are interwoven into her storytelling, challenging traditional norms, and envisioning alternative ways of being. Her exploration of political structures, particularly evident in *The Dispossessed*, reveals her interest in questioning and reimagining societal constructs. In the words of Robinson et al., "Her contributions to speculative fiction offer a means to re-imagine and re-engineer our world, integrating a deeply philosophical inquiry into the potentialities for future change" (2021, p. 2).

The Dispossessed and Bildung

The Dispossessed, part of Le Guin's Hainish Cycle, is often regarded as a central text in her bibliography that encapsulates her philosophical inquiries into societal organization and the human condition, offering a complex narrative that reflects on an array of thematic explorations pertinent to the formation of self and society.

The Dispossessed is a novel that have been extensively critically engaged with, and a look at the existing literature forms a baseline for illuminating the novel's themes and their significance in a Bildung-theoretical framework. Libretti's (2004) examination of the novel's protagonist illuminates Shevek's radical autonomy, suggesting a transformative learning process that can be paralleled with the Bildung ideals of self-formation and societal

transformation. Cross's (2018) discussion on the nature of utopianism as a dynamic, rather than static, process offers an entry point into the novel's themes of societal evolution and the fluidity of ideological constructs. The interplay of Marxism and personal ethics, as Burns (2004) observes, reflects a critical lens through which to view the novel's political and moral dimension, resonating with Bildung's emphasis on ethical self-awareness and societal responsibility. Furthermore, Le Guin's recognition extends to her imaginative approach to storytelling (Robinson et al., 2021, p. 3), which not only projects alternative realities but also recontextualizes our current one, urging readers to re-evaluate their perspectives and preconceptions.

The Dispossessed and the Pupil

The Dispossessed is a complex text, so in considering the potential of this novel to contribute to Bildung within the LK20 framework, it is also crucial to acknowledge the challenges that complex texts pose to the developmental diversity in a 10th-grade classroom.

The selection of Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* for Norwegian 10th-grade EFL learners is a strategic choice that balances thematic richness with accessibility. Despite its potential to engage even seasoned scholars in ongoing exploration, the novel remains remarkably approachable for younger readers. This accessibility is largely due to Le Guin's clear and straightforward storytelling: while the underlying themes of the novel are complex and multi-layered, the surface narrative is uncomplicated. For EFL pupils, this presents a scenario in which the text itself is not linguistically daunting, thus allowing learners to navigate the plot with relative ease. The simplicity in narrative contributes to pupils not becoming overwhelmed, facilitating a more positive and immersive reading experience.

Le Guin's writings have been praised for their narrative style, which engages ideas from both the social and physical sciences, crafting sensuous and emotionally resonant stories that prompt readers to think through new ways of understanding (Robinson et al., 2021, p. 9). And, because the deeper themes are present more so in the subtext than in the plot, *The Dispossessed* offers the flexibility for pupils to engage with its deeper themes to the extent of their own ability and interest. In other words, the novel invites pupils into its world at their own pace, enabling them to grapple with its rich thematic content as their linguistic and cognitive dispositions permit. This aspect of the novel is critical for EFL learners, who can gradually build upon their English competencies while also engaging in a personal and

educational journey through literature that stimulates their intellectual curiosity and ethical considerations.

While *The Dispossessed* provides an accessible entry point into complex thematic discussions, it is imperative to acknowledge that a foundational command of the English language is still essential for full immersion in the novel. Not all pupils possess the same level of linguistic proficiency, and as such, the depth of engagement with the novel will vary. Within any given classroom, the level of literacy can be very broad, and it is this variation that necessitates a discerning approach when selecting literature for educational purposes. Teachers must exercise judgment, taking into account the specific linguistic capabilities of their class to determine the suitability of *The Dispossessed* as a text. It is critical that the chosen literary work neither under-challenges nor overburden pupils, ensuring that the text serves as a tool for both language development and *Bildung*, rather than as an obstacle to comprehension and educational growth. In summary, however, although the themes are complex, the plot is easy to follow, and the pupil can and will thus only engage with the deeper themes insofar as it is possible for them to do so, and in the dimensions that interests them.

3.5 Validity

In qualitative research, validity is referred to as the accuracy and appropriateness of the study in terms of credibility, the possibility of extrapolation, and verifiability (Larsen, 2017, p. 93). These components ensure that the findings of the research are not only dependable but also meaningful beyond the specific contexts of the study. This section is divided in two subsections, discussing (1) validity in terms of verifiability and (2) reliability in terms of credibility. Extrapolation is subsequently discussed under the section '3.6 Limitations'.

3.5.1 Verifiability

Verifiability concerns whether the results presented and the conclusions drawn are based on a solid foundation. In other words, whether the research presents what it purports to investigate (Larsen, 2017, p. 93).

This thesis address verifiability through a rigorous application of the theoretical frameworks provided by Rosenblatt's Reader-Response Theory and Klafki's Categorical Theory of *Bildung*. The detailed analysis of *The Dispossessed* is carefully aligned with these

theories to ensure that interpretations are grounded in observable textual evidence and well-established academic principles. This process involves tracing how the text's narrative structure, thematic elements, and character development provoke reader engagement and cognitive responses as outlined by these theories. The transparency of each analytical step ensures that the conclusions drawn are directly linked to the text itself, thus providing a foundation for the thesis' claims.

3.5.2 Credibility

In qualitative research, reliability is often discussed in terms of credibility (Larsen, 2017, p. 95). Credibility relates to the researcher's judgements in interpreting data (Larsen, 2017, p. 93). First, it cannot be avoided that the decision of working with *The Dispossessed* is influenced by a personal affinity for Le Guin and her works. Particularly when working with the aesthetic impact of literature, this is both difficult and inadvisable to avoid: in order to write with any authority, it is necessary that the researcher themselves view the novel in question as art and has experienced it as such. Just as the teacher must know and love her subject to effectively mediate it to her pupils, the literary researcher must know and love theirs to mediate it to their readers. Because of this, bias is not only unavoidable, but necessary. The question becomes whether personal bias is acknowledged and reflected on.

In this thesis, credibility is ensured through a thorough and transparent methodology where interpretations are closely tied to both the theoretical framework and the textual evidence from *The Dispossessed*. The analysis aims to retain a reflexive stance, acknowledging biases and theoretical leanings. This process includes critically examining the influence of the researcher's own biases and preconceptions, ensuring that interpretations remain grounded in the text rather than personal views. This reflexivity ensures that the interpretations are open to critical examination and contextualized within the broader framework of educational literature and theory.

3.6 Limitations

This section outlines the inherent limitations of the research methodology and theoretical frameworks employed in this thesis. While the chosen approaches provide valuable insights into the intersection of literature and *Bildung*, they also introduce specific constraints that affect the generalizability and applicability of the findings. The discussion aims to

transparently address these limitations, providing a basis for understanding the scope and potential areas for further research.

3.6.1 Extrapolation

It should be addressed that the nature of exploring phenomenological literary engagement theoretically presents distinct challenges regarding verifiability. The inherent subjectivity of phenomenological inquiry, which centers on individual experiences and cognitive responses to literary texts, complicates efforts to verify findings in a conventional sense. One of the primary difficulties is that this thesis, while applying established theoretical perspectives to analyze *The Dispossessed*, relies on hypothetical scenarios involving pupil interactions and responses. These hypothetical examples are used to illustrate potential outcomes and interpretations, but they do not represent empirical data gathered from actual pupil interactions. Consequently, the conclusions drawn are speculative to some extent and represent a theoretical exploration rather than empirical evidence. Moreover, the cognitive and emotional responses of readers to literary texts can vary widely, influenced by their unique backgrounds, experiences, and personal contexts. This diversity makes it impossible to generalize findings or claim definitive results about how pupils might respond to or interpret the text.

The thesis acknowledges these limitations by focusing on the depth of analysis and the rigorous application of theoretical frameworks to ensure that interpretations remain as grounded as possible within the academic discourse. However, it is important to emphasize that while the analysis aims to provide insightful and plausible interpretations of how pupils might engage with *The Dispossessed*, these interpretations cannot be extrapolated or verified in the traditional sense. The study, therefore, remains a theoretical contribution, proposing potential pathways for educational engagement and literary analysis while recognizing the constraints of its methodological approach.

3.6.2 Methodological Diversity and Theoretical Scope

While the thesis leverages Rosenblatt's Reader-Response Theory and Klafki's categorial theory of Bildung to provide a structured and focused analysis, the reliance on these two frameworks also presents certain limitations. These theories, while robust and widely recognized in their respective fields, represent a specific lens through which literature and educational processes are interpreted.

The choice of predominantly employing Rosenblatt's and Klafki's frameworks might overlook insights that could be derived from other literary and educational theories. For instance, socio-cultural theories in education, which emphasize the role of social interaction and cultural contexts in learning, or psychoanalytic literary criticism, which could offer deeper insights into the psychological dimensions of reader engagement with texts, are not explored in this thesis. While other perspectives were considered during the conceptualization of the study, the complexity of Bildung theory and the focused scope of this thesis necessitated a more streamlined approach. Employing a limited number of frameworks ensures a thorough and detailed exploration of the chosen theories, though it also restricts the analysis to specific dimensions of how literature can influence Bildung. The inclusion of such diverse perspectives, while potentially enriching, might have broadened the scope beyond manageable limits for this thesis.

As such, methodological diversity is a strength of qualitative research that this thesis does not fully exploit. Relying primarily on theoretical analysis without empirical data collection—such as interviews, classroom observations, or reader response journals—means that the practical applications of the theories discussed are not tested in real-world educational settings.

3.7 Concluding the Methodology

In conclusion, the methodology adopted for this study represents a deliberate approach to addressing the research questions posed in this thesis. By combining qualitative textual analysis with a Bildung-theoretical framework, the aim is to present a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the educational potential aesthetic engagement with *The Dispossessed* offers. The research design is informed by the need to explore the nuanced interplay between literature, aesthetics, and phenomenological knowledge formation within the context of the contemporary Norwegian EFL classroom. The selection of Rosenblatt's Reader-Response Theory and Klafki's categorial theory of Bildung for this thesis is driven by their complementary nature, offering a nuanced approach that balances micro-level reader engagement with macro-level educational objectives, providing a comprehensive perspective for leveraging literature in educational settings.

4.0 Analysis

The analysis section examines Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, as outlined by research questions 1 and 2, by juxtaposing the content of the novel with the previously established framework of Bildung theory and the goals of the LK20 curriculum. This analysis will explore how Le Guin's narrative could facilitate Bildung experiences for Norwegian 10th-grade EFL pupils, promoting learning and personal growth. Employing reader-response theory and Text World Theory, this examination hypothesizes about the novel's potential in cognitive and emotional reader development in terms of Bildung.

The first research question, '*To what extent can Bildung be said to be represented in Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed, as delineated by the intersection of a Bildung-theoretical perspective and the goals of the LK20 curriculum?*', aims to identify the categories of Bildung present in the narrative. This question guides the investigation of the novel's content to delineate the thematic, conceptual, and ethical dimensions that contribute to Bildung development. This is done in tandem with hypothesizing how the novel's content can facilitate Bildung-experiences with Research Question 2 '*How can aesthetic engagement with The Dispossessed benefit Norwegian 10th-grade EFL pupils in their learning and personal development, based on the potential avenues identified in response to Research Question 1?*'. Insights gathered from addressing these questions will not only shed light on the immediate scope of Bildung in *The Dispossessed* but also inform the later discussion on developing a didactic model. First however, is the novel itself introduced, its setting, main character, and themes, followed by a section that presents the organization of the analysis in more detail.

4.1 Introducing *The Dispossessed*

Originally published in 1974, *The Dispossessed* is set in a future where humans inhabit multiple planets. The story unfolds across the planets Urras and Anarres, two planets that are moons to each other in a binary satellite system. Through the protagonist Shevek, an Anarresti physicist, the story explores the dichotomy between the anarchistic society of Anarres and the capitalist society of Urras. The narrative, which oscillates between Shevek's childhood and coming of age on Anarres and his groundbreaking journey to Urras, touches on themes of personal autonomy, ideological conflict, and societal structures. As the plot advances, Shevek's present-day encounters on Urras and his past experiences of life, relationships, and

societal influences intertwine to offer insights into his character and the ideological shaping of his identity. His experience on Urras challenges him to confront and make sense of the unfamiliar values and perspectives of those he meets, while the reader gains a deeper understanding of the protagonist through the societal norms and cultural landscape that have molded him.

The Dispossessed is a story that allows the reader to glimpse what the future may hold in terms of science and technology, but it is also a critical text in which the human condition and societal issues are all too familiar, no matter their context. The following section briefly presents the organization and structure of the forthcoming analysis of *The Dispossessed*.

4.2 Organization

The Dispossessed presents a rich tapestry of themes intricately woven into its narrative structure, each contributing to the potential Bildung experiences of readers. This section delineates the organization of the analysis and how the Bildung-exemplary content of *The Dispossessed* is discussed in terms of the Bildung-fundamental categories, as well as the relation to the LK20 curriculum.

The analysis explores *The Dispossessed* through the central motif of walls, a recurring symbol in Le Guin's narrative. The novel's exploration of barriers, whether physical, ideological, cultural, or psychological, presents opportunities for readers to engage cognitively and emotionally and thus to experience Bildung. The subsequent sections will engage with these themes in a phenomenological approach, hypothesizing how Le Guin's narrative art translates into Bildung-experiences in the four fundamental categories presented in the theory and method chapters. The analysis also relates the discussed fundamental categories to Bildung-oriented goals of the LK20 such as intercultural competence and democratic citizenship, which is further expounded upon in the subsequent discussion chapter.

As mentioned, the analysis takes the motif of walls as a point of departure. This is because neither the fundamental categories of Bildung nor the themes of *The Dispossessed* are isolated, but rather overlapping and mutually dependent. The novel is introduced with the description of a wall, and this motif of walls and divisions is particularly emblematic of the themes that are woven throughout the narrative, many of which can be viewed as cultural constructs of hierarchical opposition: man/woman, self/other, individual/collective,

art/science, life/death. The following sections therefore take walls as a unifying point of departure for exploring the Bildung-facilitating content of the novel. This allows for a more integrated approach, and analyses the novel in several aspects, including characters, plot, structure, themes, and symbols. The analysis is carried out in three parts:

Section ‘4.3 Introduction: Walls and Worldbuilding’, serves as a general introduction to the setting of the novel and hypothesizes about the dynamic of the reader’s initial meeting with the novel, showing in the process how all four fundamental categories may be glimpsed from the very first chapter. This sets the stage for a deeper exploration in the subsequent parts of the analysis, while simultaneously functioning as a benefit to the reader who has not read *The Dispossessed*.

Section ‘4.4 The Walls of Culture’ analyses Shevek’s first meeting with someone from Urras: the Urrasti Kimoe. The section discusses Shevek’s function as an anthropological observer and presents some of his reflections and dialogues as exemplary, particularly in the fundamental categories of language and culture and social-ethical, which are discussed in terms of intercultural competence. Lastly, the section discusses how Le Guin’s writing facilitates for the reader’s immersion through the character Shevek and hypothesizes how this may lead to a fundamental Bildung-experience of aesthetics and literature.

The final part of the analysis ‘4.5 The Walls of Self and Society’ takes a closer look at the narrative structure of *The Dispossessed*. More specifically, Le Guin’s use of chapter-wise analepsis, or flashbacks, oscillating between Shevek’s present journey to Urras and his youth on and eventual desire to depart from Anarres. The analysis focuses on Shevek’s socialization and evolving conceptions of self and society, which is discussed in terms of democratic citizenship.

4.3 Introduction: Walls and Worldbuilding

There was a wall. It did not look important. It was built of uncut rocks roughly mortared; an adult could look right over it, and even a child could climb it. Where it crossed the roadway, instead of having a gate it degenerated into mere geometry, a line, an idea of boundary. But the idea was real. It was important. (Le Guin, 2002, p. 1)

In the opening of Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, we are met with the imagery of a wall, a symbol connoting barriers and divisions, yet unassuming in its physicality. Underscoring the reality of ideas, Le Guin sets the tone for a story that is not driven by its

plot, but rather by the underlying themes of division and connection which are made manifest in the plot and character development of the protagonist Shevek.

This section functions to introduce *The Dispossessed* while showing that all four fundamental categories can be glimpsed from the beginning of the novel, analyzing how Le Guin presents her written world through the lens of Shevek's experiences, embedding deep cultural, social, and philosophical questions into the fabric of her narrative. More specifically, walls are explored in terms of worldbuilding, showing how Le Guin facilitates immersion through Shevek's experiences, and how these experiences can represent the fundamental categories 'language and culture', 'social-ethical', and 'philosophy', as well as how immersion facilitates experiencing Bildung of aesthetics and literature.

Text World Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how readers mentally construct the universe of *The Dispossessed*. By engaging with the text, readers create 'text worlds' where they navigate the physical and philosophical landscapes presented. From the outset, the wall sets the tone for the narrative, preparing readers to engage with the complex themes of freedom, confinement, and societal structure. In terms of Text World Theory, the opening of *The Dispossessed* serves as a conceptual portal for readers, inviting them to build a text world where ideas hold as much substance as physical entities: 'the wall' in *The Dispossessed* encapsulates not only a physical boundary but also a conceptual and philosophical barrier. This dual function is reminiscent of real-world structures like the Berlin Wall, which historically divided not just territories but ideologies, symbolizing both separation and the longing for connection. In invoking such imagery, readers are encouraged to reflect on how physical barriers can embody broader existential and cultural dichotomies. The wall, as introduced, becomes a textural element in the reader's mental model of the novel's universe, a symbol that is revisited and reinterpreted throughout the text. It sets a stage where themes of division, connection, and the space between are explored.

The wall also functions as the reader's first meeting with the broader physical reality of *The Dispossessed*:

The wall shut in not only the landing field but the ships that came down out of space, and the men that came on the ships, and the worlds they came from, and the rest of the universe. It enclosed the universe, leaving Anarres outside, free. (*TD*, p. 1)

This description of the wall as shutting out 'the rest of the universe' serves as a conceptual starting point from which readers can begin to construct their understanding of the physical world of *The Dispossessed*. This wall encapsulates the entirety of a cosmos, providing readers

with a tangible point of reference for the immensity of the fictional universe's scale, as well as describing human success in colonizing multiple worlds. The wall, thus, guides the reader in a process of organizing the narrative's cosmos in their minds. The interstellar setting estranges readers from their terrestrial familiarity, encouraging them to reconceptualize notions of what is possible and what is not. Le Guin's depiction of a society that has achieved such feats of travel and colonization invites suspension of disbelief and primes the readers to immerse themselves in a world that is alien to them. Immersion into such alien worlds may provoke a deep re-evaluation of concepts of reality, society, and self.

This estrangement from the familiar to confront the alien becomes an important outset for discussing the text's ability to promote Bildung of language and culture. The text offers a stark contrast to the reader's lived experiences and may thus prompt reflection on things that often are taken for granted, such as social norms and cultural perspectives. In this way, as will be elaborated on later in the analysis, *The Dispossessed* can offer a powerful conduit for vicarious intercultural encounters, as readers metaphorically step into the shoes of the other, fostering empathy and a broader understanding of the diversity of human experience. The otherness that readers confront in the novel can be seen as a metaphorical 'wall'—a barrier that, once scaled, provides a new vantage point from which to view and understand the complex interplay of language, culture, and society. By suspending disbelief and immersing in Le Guin's written world, readers may experience an expansion of their aesthetic and cultural horizons. They engage with new linguistic structures, societal configurations, and ethical questions, which can resonate with their personal development and challenge them to grow in their understanding of the world.

It quickly becomes clear, however, that this technologically advanced possible future comes with problems, because “looked at from the other side, the wall enclosed Anarres: the whole planet was inside it, a great prison camp, cut off from other worlds and other men, in quarantine.” (*TD*, p. 1). This inversion of perspective on the wall, from a boundary of exclusion to one of containment, deepens the theme of division that Le Guin crafts. The duality of the wall as both barrier and enclosure instills in the reader the sense of dichotomy that is central to the novel's discourse. Here, Le Guin not only presents a world divided but also underscores the inherent paradox of isolation as freedom, and unity as confinement. Walls can be perceived as protective or oppressive, depending on which side one finds oneself on, and through this vantage point, the physicality of Anarres is rendered as both a home and a cell.

Through this dichotomous imagery, readers are invited to engage with the text on a level that transcends the literal, offering a metaphorical framework for readers to experience philosophical Bildung: as readers contemplate the paradoxical nature of the wall, they are prompted to reflect on notions of freedom and confinement. This reflective process encourages a deeper comprehension of the philosophical tensions present in the narrative, facilitating a Bildung experience where readers internalize and grapple with these existential questions. Readers are invited to deconstruct traditional hierarchical opposites, such as freedom versus imprisonment, and consider a more nuanced understanding of these concepts. The “great prison camp” that is Anarres symbolizes a society's attempt to isolate itself from the influences and corruptions of others, but at what cost? Does this self-imposed isolation truly result in freedom, or is it just another form of confinement? By prompting such questions, the text's rendering of the wall's ambiguous nature serves as a stimulus for readers to question and redefine their notions of freedom, not as a binary state but as a spectrum where various degrees and forms of liberty and restriction can coexist.

It is within this thematic complexity that the narrative finally unveils the wall's significance to the unfolding plot: Shevek's departure to Urras. Picking up from this moment, the next section of the analysis focuses on Shevek's journey from Anarres to Urras and his role as an anthropological observer.

4.4 The Walls of Culture

Building on the previous section, this section begins by establishing the significance of the protagonist's journey from Anarres to Urras, before analyzing Shevek's first physical introduction to an Urrasti. In particular, the following explores how Shevek functions as an anthropological observer, potentially provoking readers' reflections on interculturality and gender, potentiating Bildung experiences within the fundamental Bildung categories of language and culture, philosophical-existential, and social-ethical. Furthermore, and in tandem with the mentioned Bildung-categories, is hypothesized how the reader in aesthetic experience may immerse themselves in the novel through Shevek, resulting in reaching the fundamental layer of Bildung of aesthetics and literature.

The departure of Shevek is a watershed moment in the novel, marking the first instance of an Anarresti leaving their planet since its colonization “a hundred and seventy years ago” (*TD*, p. 345). Consequently, as he is boarding the cargo spaceship 'Mindful' (for

there is a “trade agreement” (*TD*, p. 92), the fields surrounding the wall is filled with protestors:

Some of them had come there to kill a traitor. Others had come to prevent him from leaving, or to yell insults at him, or just to look at him; and all these others obstructed the sheer brief path of the assassins (...), the man they wanted came walking up the road, alone. (*TD*, p. 3)

The paragraph’s violent mood underscores the profound societal rifts between Urras and Anarres, encapsulating the central conflicts of the novel. The departure is not merely a physical journey but represents a challenge to societal norms and a historic schism between two worlds with fundamentally different ideologies. Anarres, the moon where Shevek's story begins, was granted to the ‘Odonians’ following an anarchist uprising led by the woman Odo, allowing them to establish an experimental society based on anarchist and communal principles. This society starkly contrasts with the hierarchical and materialistic structures of Urras, which mirrors our own Earth in many ways. In leaving, the Odonians “took nothing. Because there is nothing here but States and their weapons, the rich and their lies, and the poor and their misery.” (*TD*, p. 345). The Urrasti/Anarresti division embodies a philosophical and political divide between capitalist (‘propertarian’, in Anarresti terms) and anarchist societies; Urras represents wealth and excess at the cost of the exploitation of the proletariat; Anarres represents Marxist ideals of self-sufficiency and mutual aid, at the cost of an asceticism that, while upheld as idealism, is also forced by a severe scarcity of natural resources. While on Urras, Shevek summarizes the divide as “[we have] nothing but each other. Here you see the jewels. There you see the eyes” (*TD*, p. 345). The protests surrounding Shevek’s departure reflect the deep-seated contempt that the peoples from these planets have been socialized to harbor for each other. For they do not socialize *with* each other: “We don’t go there, we don’t talk, there’s no communication. We really have no idea what life’s like on Urras now” (*TD*, p. 42), a status quo their respective governing powers have, until now, been content to maintain for the stability of their societies. Shevek’s departure is a moment fraught with the complexities of interplanetary politics, the courage to confront the unknown, and the longing for understanding and connection beyond one's familiar borders.

It is also a moment that characterizes Shevek in his defining drive, his “need for communication, the wish to unbuild walls.” (*TD*, p. 75). This drive mirrors the *Bildung* process as defined by Klafki’s double-sided opening, characterized by the reciprocal opening of the self to the world and the world to the self. As such, Shevek’s journey is riddled with his

critical engagement with contrasting social values, which becomes a force not only for his personal growth, but also for societal transformation. In his departure, Shevek personifies the *Bildung* ideal of achieving self-determination and moral responsibility, highlighting the interplay between personal transformation and societal evolution.

The introduction of Shevek, “the man they wanted”, is a pivotal moment not just for the Anarresti, but also as an entry point for the reader into *The Dispossessed*. This entry into Shevek’s mind is central to the narrative construction of the novel, wherein his personal reflections intertwine with his experiences, beginning with his journey from Anarres to Urras alongside Kimoe, an Urrasti doctor charged with administering Shevek with vaccines, as well as answers to his questions. Shevek’s reflections place their interactions too in the context of walls:

Kimoe’s ideas never seemed to be able to go in a straight line; they had to walk around this and avoid that, and then they ended up smack against a wall. There were walls around all his thoughts, and he seemed utterly unaware of them though he was perpetually hiding behind them. Only once did Shevek see them breached, in all their days of conversation between the worlds. (*TD*, p. 16)

Shevek's metaphor of walls reflects the cultural and intellectual barriers that shape our existential and philosophical views. Kimoe's thought processes, bound by these invisible walls, illustrate the profound impact of cultural conditioning on one's identity and the perception of 'self' and 'other.' Kimoe, representing to Shevek ‘the other’ and the Urrasti worldview, is described as having thoughts that 'never seemed to be able to go in a straight line,' symbolizing how deeply ingrained values and assumptions not only influence what one thinks but also the very pattern of one's thinking. Shevek realizes his own bias, reflecting that “each took for granted certain relationships which the other could not even see.” (*TD*, p. 14).

In so far as representations of Urrasti culture resonates with the reader’s own cultural makeup (keeping in mind that Urrasti mirrors the Earth), the reader is invited to question the familiar through Shevek’s gaze. In terms of the transactional theory of literature, the reader is entering a dialogue between the text and their own life experiences. Through language and narrative elements, the text evokes the reader’s awareness of the walls that exist within and around them, which can define their understanding of themselves as well as different cultures. The dialogue between Shevek and Kimoe is laced with both the visible and invisible walls of their differing worldviews, highlighting the importance of intercultural competence, and particularly the fruitfulness of taking genuine interest in the other. Because although “all their

conversations were like this, exhausting to the doctor and unsatisfying to Shevek (...)” they were “(...) yet intensely interesting to both.” (*TD*, p. 15).

The Dispossessed, with its thoughtful cultural explorations, becomes an entry point for readers, particularly perhaps 10th graders and other adolescents, to explore and build upon their notions of self, other, and society, encapsulating again the four fundamental Bildung categories. To illustrate, when Shevek debates with Kimoe about the role of women in society, the dialogue may transcend a mere cultural exchange between characters and become a reflective mirror for readers:

He had asked why there were no women on the ship, and Kimoe had replied that running a space freighter was not women’s work. (...) “Is it true, Dr Shevek, that women in your society are treated exactly like men?” (*TD*, p. 16)

Although Kimoe’s sentiment on gender was more explicitly resonant when Le Guin wrote *The Dispossessed* in the 1970s USA, the concept of gendered identity, social and personal, ever remains culturally relevant. Kimoe’s sentiment, however, is lost on Shevek: “That would be a waste of good equipment,” said Shevek with a laugh, and then a second laugh as the full ridiculousness of the idea grew upon him” (*TD*, p. 16). In the absence of a cultural reference point for Kimoe’s question about gender roles, Shevek interprets the question purely biologically, reverting to genitalia as a basal connotation of gender. This cultural estrangement invites the reader to question familiar societal norms through Shevek’s gaze:

... I meant in the matter of their social status.” “Status is the same as class?” Kimoe tried to explain status, failed, and went back to the first topic. “Is there really no distinction between men’s work and women’s work?” “Well, no, it seems a very mechanical basis for the division of labour, doesn’t it?” (*TD*, p. 17)

This conversation may give associative rise to the reader’s knowledge of and positioning in ongoing discourse on gender. Thus, the conversation is potentiated as exemplary of Bildung in the fundamental category of Bildung of language and culture, in the sense that it encourages readers to engage with and reflect on different cultural understandings and uses of language regarding gender roles. It promotes an awareness of how language shapes our perception of gender and social status, thus fostering intercultural competence and a deeper appreciation for linguistic diversity.

Shevek's inability to grasp Kimoe's gender norms not only highlights the arbitrary nature of such societal constructions but also challenges the reader to question and critically

evaluate their own cultural conditioning regarding gender roles. In the fundamental category of social-ethical Bildung, this conversation encourages readers to critically evaluate their own societal norms and ethical beliefs about gender roles. It challenges them to consider the ethical implications of gender discrimination and the importance of equality, fostering moral and social awareness. Through Shevek's innocent and logical questioning, readers are invited to reflect on their own cultural conditioning, encouraging a conscious effort to address gender-based oppression.

By presenting Shevek's interactions with Kimoe, Le Guin not only highlights the arbitrariness of gender roles but also uses Shevek's unique cultural perspective to question the foundational structures of class and social status ('status is the same as class?'), and it is clear, in these passages and the novel at large, that Shevek may be viewed as an anthropological observer.

Going forward, while staying in the context of gender, language and culture, and social-ethical Bildung, the analysis focuses on immersion. Shevek's didactic power as an anthropological observer stems from providing the reader with an alien perspective of their own culture, allowing them to perceive themselves from the eyes of this textual 'other'. This, of course, is only possible because Shevek and Anarresti culture in general is as foreign to the reader as is Shevek's perception of Urrasti culture. This dynamic, where the value of Shevek's perspectives depends on the reader's success as an anthropological observer of Shevek himself, creates a narrative reversal. The reader, steeped in the norms of their Earth-centric viewpoint, is compelled to confront the strangeness of their cultural assumptions.

Kimoe, in the continuation of his conversation with Shevek, rephrases his question on gendered work roles: "Is there really no distinction between men's work and women's work?" (*TD*, p. 16). In response, Shevek rejects any notion that men are inherently superior to women:

A person chooses work according to interest, talent, strength—what has the sex to do with that?" "Men are physically stronger," the doctor asserted with professional finality. "Yes, often, and larger; but what does that matter when we have machines? And even when we don't have machines, when we must dig with the shovel or carry on the back, the men maybe work faster—the big ones—but the women work longer ... Often I have wished I was as tough as a woman." (*TD*, pp. 16-17)

When Shevek is baffled by the doctor's assertion that physical strength justifies gendered work roles, readers are not only invited to scrutinize any preconceived notions about gender and society, but also to scrutinize Shevek as a character. On the one hand, his observations challenge the reader to consider the relative nature of culture and the ways in which what is deemed 'natural' or 'right' is often a product of social conditioning. On the other, the reader may become curious (*what are his views on other topics?*) or critical (*of course there are gendered differences! How ignorant he is...*) of Shevek. Shevek's sincere and sometimes, at least to the reader, naive viewpoint may facilitate aesthetic engagement through immersion in his character. The directness of Shevek's observations, combined with the foreignness of his perspective, may make him as interesting to the reader as Kimoe is to him. This may evoke questions like 'who is he?' and 'what can I learn from him?', engendering an immersive experience that is grounded in genuine intercultural curiosity. Because the novel is largely driven by Shevek, immersing in his character becomes a central avenue for experiencing Bildung through aesthetic reading.

This can be seen in Shevek's continued conversation with Kimoe, which also renders an impactful reflection on sexism:

“But the loss of—of everything feminine—of delicacy—and the loss of masculine self-respect—You can't pretend, surely, in your work, that women are your equals? In physics, in mathematics, in the intellect? You can't pretend to lower yourself constantly to their level?” (...) “Of course, I have known highly intelligent women, women who could think just like a man,” the doctor said, hurriedly, aware that he had been almost shouting—that he had, Shevek thought, been pounding his hands against the locked door and shouting... Shevek turned the conversation, but he went on thinking about it. This matter of superiority and inferiority must be a central one in Urrasti social life. If to respect himself Kimoe had to consider half the human race as inferior to him, how then did women manage to respect themselves—did they consider men inferior? (*TD*, p. 17)

Shevek converses with Kimoe and reflects on and makes initial assumptions about Urrasti culture. The interplay of internal dialogue and external action allows readers to grasp ideas and concepts such as 'self' and 'other', somewhere on the spectrum between consciously and unconsciously, through their manifestation in Shevek's life. Whether he is engaging in conversation, observing the world around him, or reflecting on his experiences, Shevek's thoughts are presented in a manner that is intertwined with the narrative action, clearly

delineating his development, opening in the process for the reader's engagement with all facets of his experience. Readers are thus pulled into Shevek's inner life, which becomes an aesthetic space where his philosophical musings and understanding of Urrasti culture constitute the text-world. Shevek's journey on Urras is laden with intercultural encounters and subsequent reflections, ranging from serious, as in the example above, to the humorous, as when Shevek sees a modern toilet: "[the bathroom] contained a bathtub, a washstand, and an elaborate shit-stool (...) [each fixture] a kind of ultimate apotheosis of the excremental." (*TD*, p. 64). The novel invites the reader to vicariously experience Shevek's realizations and struggles, allowing them to uncover deeper meanings (as well as comic reliefs) at their own pace. By offering a character whose thoughts and feelings are deeply probed and vividly conveyed, Le Guin enables readers to navigate the complexities of the text-world and its implications for the real world through immersion in and a personal affinity for Shevek.

In so far as this narrative technique is effective in captivating and immersing the reader; in so far as Le Guin's writing evokes experiences of intellectual and aesthetic synergy, the reader's own interactions with the novel may become exemplary of aesthetics and literature: all at once or gradually, the reality of the reader merge with the reality of Shevek, constituting each other in perceptions, wants, thoughts and emotions. The cognitive framework of the reader coalesces with words on pages into aesthetic experience, and as the self opens to this aspect of reality—the literary ethos of creative, imaginative, beatific and intellectual capacity—literature may be personally realized as art.

4.5 The Walls of Self and Society

The previous section touched on how Shevek already from the first chapter of *The Dispossessed* functions as an anthropological observer of Urras, a world that, despite its foreign star system, resembles our own. Shevek stands on the periphery, observing the social constructs and cultural norms of Urras with a dispassionate clarity that only an outsider can achieve. This final part of the analysis explores how Le Guin utilizes flashbacks in the narrative structure—oscillating chapter-wise between Shevek's present on Urras and his youth on Anarres—and how that further facilitates for the reader's immersion and depth of engagement. The section begins with a look at Shevek's socialization and ends with a discussion of his relationship to the Urrasti and Anarresti societies in the context of democracy and citizenship.

Shevek's home, Anarres, is founded on principles antithetical to those of Urras. It is a society that has renounced possession, power, and hierarchy in favor of mutual aid and collective living. Thus, Shevek's perspective is invaluable; he scrutinizes the Urrasti way of life with the same curiosity and critical eye with which a reader might examine an alien civilization; with which the reader might examine Shevek himself. To the reader, Shevek represents 'the other', the unknown; an alien whose personality, thoughts, and language are at odds with the readers 'earth-centric' cultural perspectives. A clear example of this is the role of personal pronouns in Pravik, the Anarresti language:

Little children might say, "My mother", but very soon they learned to say "the mother". Instead of "My hands hurts", it was "The hands hurts me", and so on; to say "This one is mine and that's yours" in Pravik one said, "I use this one and you use that". (Le Guin, 2002, p. 58)

In pravik, the absence of possessive pronouns starkly contrasts with languages like English and Norwegian, where possessiveness is deeply ingrained linguistically. The transition from "my mother" to "the mother" in Pravik not only challenges the concept of personal ownership but also reflects a societal structure that prioritizes collective identity over individual possession. Shevek's time on Urras is fraught with examples of cultural miscommunication, in language, behaviour, and how these are reflected in social structures. The previous section discussed how this cultural contrast may spark curiosity, but this initial estrangement may also prompt readers to question the relevance and credibility of Shevek's views, possibly dismissing them: '*why should I care about Shevek's opinions, for all I know, he and all Anarresti may just be lunatics*'. However, as the narrative progresses and layers of Shevek's character are revealed—in the subtle, but constant exposure to cultural expression, as well as character-defining events in his life—his behaviors and ideologies gradually paints a coherent picture.

For example, in chapter two, Baby Shevek, sitting in a sunlit spot by the window, angrily pushes another baby encroaching on his spot away. Baby Shevek's instinctive claim, "Mine sun!" is immediately addressed by a matron who gently, yet firmly, corrects him: "It is not yours," she explains, emphasizing the communal ethos that "Nothing is yours. It is to use. It is to share" (*TD*, p. 27). Steeped in Shevek's perspective the reader must constantly consider new information, inadvertently engaging in the anthropological piecing together of this man and his culture. This iterative process of comprehension facilitates immersion by mirroring the transactional nature of reading; each narrative revelation invites reevaluation and deeper

insight into the text. Through consistent exposure to the subtleties of Anarresti cultural expressions in his thoughts and actions, Shevek becomes a more tangible and relatable character. This gradual unveiling of Shevek and his society's complexities not only brings Anarresti culture to life but also builds a bridge of empathy and understanding between the reader and the text. By engaging with the unfolding narrative, the reader moves from viewing Shevek as an alien figure to recognizing him as a nuanced representation of a philosophically and ethically consistent way of life, challenging and expanding their own worldview in the process.

Taken seriously by the reader, the Anarresti culture and Shevek's socialization become fertile with opportunities for the reader to encounter new worldviews and to examine their own. Shevek's reflection on the Pravik language, for instance, underscores the significance of language as a vehicle for expressing complex cultural concepts. Such dialogues and reflections may become exemplary of language and culture by encouraging a critical reflection on how language can reveal, obscure, and generally shape notions of truth.

In a passage following Shevek as a teen, a profound discussion unfolds among his peers that succinctly captures this exemplary opportunity:

I never thought before," said Tirin unruffled, "of the fact that there are people sitting on a hill, up there, on Urras, looking at Anarres, at us, and saying, 'Look, there's the Moon.' Our earth is their Moon; our Moon is their earth." "Where, then, is Truth?" declaimed Bedap, and yawned. "In the hill one happens to be sitting on," said Tirin. (*TD*, p. 41).

This idea of truth being relative to one's hill manages to capture the essence of ethnocentrism, highlighting how cultural positioning determines one's perception of truth. Shevek's awareness of this relativism—how different societies perceive each other as 'alien' or simply 'bastards' ("The word "bastard", untranslatable in the foreman's language, meant nothing to her except some kind of foreign term for her people" (*TD*, p. 3))—plants the seeds of his quest for a deeper, universal understanding that transcends cultural divides.

To the reader, Tirin's statement that the truth is 'in the hill one happens to be sitting on' might be exemplary in the fundamental categories of philosophy and of language and culture; a profound realization of the fluidity of truth and the impact of perspective beckons the reader to confront and reconsider their own understanding of 'truth' as it pertains to cultural and societal constructs.

As Shevek becomes culturally acclimated on Urras, his initial preconceptions about Urrasti culture are challenged by the realities of its complex society. Each encounter offers him a deeper insight into the intricacies of Urrasti life, moving beyond the ideological constructs of Anarres to engage with a world that is both richly diverse and surprisingly familiar. Shevek realizes that the alienation he initially experienced has dissolved:

Of course there were endless things he did not understand, he only glimpsed, now, how many things: this whole incredibly complex society with all its nations, classes, castes, cults, customs, and its magnificent, appalling, and interminable history. And each individual he met was a puzzle, full of surprises. But they were not the gross, cold egoists he had expected them to be: they were as complex and various as their culture, as their landscape; and they were intelligent; and they were kind. They treated him like a brother, they did all they could to make him feel not lost, not alien, but at home. (*TD*, p. 76)

Shevek's initial prejudices against Urrasti society—framed largely around his expectations of encountering a homogeneously egoistic and cold populace—are progressively dismantled through his interactions. These personal encounters reveal a complexity and kindness within individuals that transcends the overarching societal structures, and Shevek finds that the human spirit is ultimately indomitable; that it finds expression regardless of any cultural conditioning.

Shevek realizes that the oppressive will of the Urrasti government find resistance in the individual minds of Urrasti citizens that are hoping and striving for a better society. Furthermore, with the help of Urrasti scientist Chifoilisk: “You are aware, then, that you’ve been bought?” (*TD*, p. 135), Shevek comes to realize that he is no longer, that he never truly was, a guest in the eyes of the Urrasti Government. That they don’t want to connect, but rather to own Shevek’s research, to use it for their own power and scientific advancement. Shevek's dawning realization of his instrumental use by the Urrasti government highlights the deeper political machinations at play, reflecting the stark contrast between his ideals and the pragmatism of Urras. When Shevek eventually fully realizes himself a prisoner, a hostage, he runs away, seeking allies who share his vision for freedom and brotherhood, which he finds in Urrasti anarchist Tuio Maedda. In conversation with Tuio, Shevek gets to view himself from the perspective of the Urrasti government:

I wonder if you fully understand why they've kept you so well hidden (...), why you were never allowed to appear at any meeting open to the public. Why they'll be after you like dogs after a rabbit the moment they find you're gone. It's not just because they want this idea of yours. But because you are an idea. (*TD*, p. 294).

The idea Shevek represents; "to know that it exists, to know that there is a society without government, without police, without economic exploitation, that they can never again say that it's just a mirage, an idealist's dream!" (*TD*, p. 294), thus sets the stage for a burgeoning anarchist movement on Urras, echoing the historical revolution on Anarres that led to its establishment as a separate, anarchist society seven generations prior. Shevek's focus shifts from building bridges between Anarres and Urras, or self and other, to the dynamic relationship between self and society; to tear at the walls that separate ruler from ruled.

This realization underscores a critical theme in understanding democratic citizenship as portrayed in *The Dispossessed*: that while political systems and societal structures must shape its citizens, they do not solely define the capacities and responsibilities of individuals within them. In the penultimate chapter and the final flashback of *The Dispossessed*, the burgeoning anarchist uprising on Urras is juxtaposed with Shevek's own cultural discontent and ultimate dissent in leaving Anarres:

If we must all agree, all work together, we're no better than a machine. If an individual can't work in solidarity with his fellows, it's his duty to work alone. His duty and his right. We have been denying people that right. We've been saying, more and more often, you must work with the others, you must accept the rule of the majority. But any rule is tyranny. The duty of the individual is to accept no rule, to be the initiator of his own acts, to be responsible. Only if he does so will the society live, and change, and adapt, and survive. (*TD*, p. 357)

Shevek's journey to and experiences on Urras may become exemplary social-ethical Bildung by conveying that true participation in a society is not mere conformity but can involve significant dissent and even rebellion. That, in a sense, "any rule is tyranny" (*TD*, p. 357). Whether that tyranny justifies armed rebellion, as it does for Shevek on Urras, or whether it justifies a breach of the most sacred social law, as his departure from Anarres represents, these acts of defiance underscore the necessity of active, conscious resistance to oppressive systems. This notion reflects a critical understanding that democratic societies must accommodate dissenting voices to regulate the democratic paradox and thus ensure genuine dialogue and societal progress. In this light, Shevek's actions embody the ideal of active

citizenship, where the obligation to engage critically with one's society is as fundamental as the rights granted by it. Through Shevek's narrative, *The Dispossessed* argues that the health of a democracy depends not just on the participation of its citizens in sanctioned, everyday activities, but crucially on their willingness to challenge and rethink the very frameworks that govern them. "You cannot buy the revolution. You cannot make the revolution. You can only be the revolution. It is in your spirit, or it is nowhere." (*TD*, p. 300). Thus, through Shevek's journey, the reader may experience Bildung in the social-ethical category through realizations of the fundamental relationship between self and society; that societal development is the result of an interplay between individual agency and collective transformation within any political system, and that active citizenship may necessitate stepping outside the boundaries of conventional participation to initiate change.

5.0 Discussion

The goal of this study is to demonstrate, through the analysis of *The Dispossessed*, that aesthetic engagement with literature can facilitate Bildung experiences by providing exemplary notions—pregnant didactic examples (Klafki, 2001, p. 187)—across different fundamental categories—areas of knowledge (Klafki, 1964, p. 332, as cited in Straum, 2018, p. 42). The analysis was delineated by two research questions:

1. *To what extent can Bildung be said to be represented in Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed, as delineated by the intersection of a Bildung-theoretical perspective and the goals of the LK20 curriculum?*
2. *How can aesthetic engagement with The Dispossessed benefit Norwegian 10th-grade EFL pupils in their learning and personal development, based on the potential avenues identified in response to Research Question 1?*

RQ1 was addressed in three parts by discussing the novel's form and content and analyzing textual excerpts relating to the protagonist Shevek. The results indicate that the four fundamental categories of Bildung employed— (1) Bildung of aesthetics and literature, (2) philosophical-existential Bildung, (3) Bildung of language and culture, and (4) social-ethical Bildung—are intricately woven into the narrative. RQ2 was partly answered in an integrated fashion with RQ1. The analysis showed how the form and content of the novel encourage aesthetic engagement through immersion in Shevek, hypothesizing how this can lead to experiencing Bildung of aesthetics and literature. This was presented as a goal in itself, strengthening pupils' ability to create text-worlds in transaction with fictional literature, but also as a bridge for experiencing Bildung in other categories through genuine engagement with philosophical, cultural, and social-ethical issues. The results of the analysis are summarized as follows:

1. The analysis showed how Shevek's function as an anthropological observer, such as in his interactions with Kimoe, simultaneously represent different fundamental categories which were tied to intercultural competence.
2. The analysis emphasized the importance of immersion as a fundamental aspect of experiencing Bildung in the category of aesthetics and literature, presenting this in turn as crucial for engaging with other categories of Bildung.

3. The analysis discussed Le Guin's use of flashbacks as an immersive means to explore Shevek's socialization and his relationship with Urrasti and Anarresti societies. Shevek's ideological evolution was found to exemplify active citizenship through several Bildung-categories, illustrating the need for critical engagement and resistance to oppressive systems as components of democratic participation.

Going forward, the discussion interprets these results, focusing on the educational context of the thesis. This discussion is tied to the thesis' broader goal of experiential and holistic learning in terms of Bildung and the role of the school and the teacher in accommodating this goal. This discussion indicates an answer to the third research question:

3. *To what extent can the findings from Research Questions 1 and 2 inform a didactic model for promoting Bildung-experiences through aesthetic literary engagement?*

Based on RQ3, the chapter concludes by sharing the thesis' recommendation for practical implementation and future research.

5.1 Didactic Implications

This section discusses the didactic implications of the analysis, exploring more in depth how aesthetic engagement with *The Dispossessed* can lead to learning and development in accordance with the LK20. Based on the results and the theoretical framework, the discussion is structured into three parts: aesthetic reading and immersion; intercultural competence; and democracy and citizenship. Each part will present a detailed interpretation of how learning may occur through examples of hypothetical Bildung-experiences from the analysis.

5.1.1 Aesthetic Reading and Immersion

Aesthetic reading and immersion are central to the thesis' positioning and perspective on learning, grounded in Rosenblatt's (1995) transactional theory of literature and Klafki's (2001) categorial theory of Bildung. This thesis posits that engaging deeply with literary texts through aesthetic reading enables pupils to experience a transformative transaction between themselves and the narrative. Such engagement is seen as a double-sided opening where the reader's horizon of understanding interacts with the text, leading to a continuous reformation of their cognitive and emotional landscape.

The Dispossessed presents a dual narrative that the analysis discussed as fostering aesthetic immersion. Through the oscillation between Shevek's past and present, readers witness him continuously negotiate his identity in face of his changing surroundings, and is indeed compelled to do so themselves, gradually building the understanding necessary for immersing themselves in a world that is at once alien and deeply human. By understanding Shevek's past and present, readers immerse themselves in a complex world, challenging their preconceived notions about identity, society, and culture. This process is indicative of Klafki's double-sided opening, where pupils impose on and open to new knowledge, reshaping their understanding of the world in the process (Klafki, 2001, p. 193). In other words, literary immersion can be viewed as a continuous double-sided opening, an ongoing dialectic between the objective (the text) and the subjective (the reader).

The analysis discussed how Shevek functions as an anthropological observer and hypothesized how this may immerse readers in the narrative transactionally. Subsequently, the concluding paragraph of section 4.4 presented how the very experience of aesthetic immersion may lead to Bildung in the fundamental layer of aesthetics and literature: that by reflecting on their aesthetic experience, the pupil may realize, on a deeply personal level, the textual capacity to communicate thoughts and emotions in vicarious experience that is unbounded by time space. Such fundamental experiences are characterized by a simultaneous cognitive and emotional impact (Klafki, 2001, p. 190). In this instance, instilling in the pupil a fundamental understanding of and awakening a significant interest in literature. Furthermore, subscribing to the idea that the social and aesthetic dimensions of reading are phenomenologically inseparable (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 23), facilitating such a Bildung experience becomes paramount not just in promoting interest in literature, but in promoting Bildung through literature in general. In other words, because "social insights may arise" from "social and psychological insights as they flower from the actual aesthetic experience" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 31), aesthetic experience, or immersion, is viewed as a prerequisite for experiencing Bildung through literature.

For instance, using the example from the analysis, *The Dispossessed* as exemplary of aesthetics and literature is experienced in conjunction with the text's reflections on gender ("if to respect himself Kimoe had to consider half the human race as inferior to him...") and interculturality ("this matter of superiority and inferiority must be a central one in Urrasti social life"), and thus also as exemplary of social-ethical Bildung and Bildung of language and culture. In this regard, the intrinsic value of literature as both the joy of reading and art in its own right cannot be overstated: The pupil that has personally realized literature as art is

trained to merit their ability to create text-worlds in transaction with the written word and thus prone to engage further in aesthetic engagement with narrative texts; to candidly subject, and nurture in the privacy of their minds, their thoughts, emotions and experiences, subjecting these to the frontiers of their understanding of the world as it is represented by the text.

In conclusion, it is only when and if immersion occurs, when and if the reader truly engages aesthetically with the text, that the narrative is fully potentiated as a learning material. In other words, the narrative's content, including that which may qualify as Bildung-exemplary, is continually transacted with the immersed reader in a double-sided opening.

5.1.2 Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence (IC) emphasizes the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across different cultures. Central concerns in developing IC in pupils include fostering democratic values, empathy, and global citizenship. In words of the LK20 curriculum, IC aims to help pupils “[recognize] the fact that the way they view the world is culture dependent (...) [and to] open for new ways to interpret the world, and promote curiosity and engagement and help to prevent prejudices.” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). As such, IC involves the development of skills and attitudes that enable pupils to interact respectfully and effectively with people from diverse backgrounds. This aligns with the concept of *Allgemeinbildung* (Bildung for all) which seeks to cultivate the development of society as whole through holistic personal development and a sense of social responsibility.

Contributions from Martha Nussbaum (2006) and Matos & Melo-Pfeifer (2020) emphasize the role of literature in fostering empathy, critical thinking, and an appreciation for cultural diversity. It is in this context *The Dispossessed* is presented as a way to promote IC by immersing readers in the contrasting cultures and ideologies of Anarres and Urras: the former representing a cultural ‘other’ that is characterized by radical equality, the latter representing cultural familiarity as viewed anthropologically by a lucid and reflective ‘other’, Shevek. As Shevek navigates the two societies, his journey may prompt readers to critically examine their own beliefs and recognize how culture shapes societal norms, fostering empathy and curiosity towards the other.

The analysis discussed how *The Dispossessed* through Shevek offers a distinctive lens through which readers can examine societal constructs such as gender roles and class divisions. For instance, Shevek's conversation with Kimoe about the status of women in society invites readers to reflect on their own cultural perceptions. The narrative not only

broadens pupils' linguistic and cultural horizons but also encourages a critical re-evaluation of preconceived norms and values. In other words, reading *The Dispossessed* may facilitate a mental de-centering from one's culture by experiencing it from the mind of someone outside it. Experiencing this may lead to the development of IC through a Bildung-experience in the elementary in terms of a higher-order understanding of the concept of bias; that we are 'the other' too, consequently encouraging respect and curiosity towards others and critical examination of that which is often taken for granted such as the self and its cultural dictations. In terms of the double-sided opening, the objective or normative insight of the bias of experience is simultaneously experienced through the presented experience of Shevek, 'the other', and subjectively in reflecting on one's own life. This normative sense of bias, as it is expressed in the emotional presence and philosophical insight of the character Shevek, thus depicts both the normative and emotional foundation and implications of bias. The newfound realization of bias becomes available in reflections on life, for example in terms of concepts like ethics and responsibility; psychology and experience; knowledge and power, as well as in the cognitive bridging between such concepts. Such reflection aligns with the LK20's focus on enabling pupils to navigate and appreciate diverse ways of living, thinking, and communicating as well as its goals of promoting "curiosity and engagement and help to prevent prejudices" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3).

Experiencing bias vicariously through aesthetic engagement with *The Dispossessed* may further lead to Bildung-experiences in the intersection between the fundamental layers of language and culture and philosophical-existential Bildung: in reflection, the pupil may reach an understanding of bias that points beyond the example's specific context of human interaction, realizing that experience itself is contingent on a personal makeup that includes culture, language and knowledge, and that these hold value and power as such. If the pupil at first fails to reach such realizations on their own, the gradual unveiling of Shevek's coming of age and intellectual and ethical development illustrate how language and social norms shape cultural and individual identity in processes of socialization. As pupils navigate Shevek's experiences, they undertake in literary transaction a parallel exploration of their own, which may be leveraged, especially through teacher scaffolding, to a more nuanced understanding of culture and social responsibility. Thus, in conclusion, *The Dispossessed* can inspire curiosity in pupils through vicarious experience of Shevek's anthropological approach to the unknown, as well as encourage empathy by illustrating to the pupil that they are 'the other' too.

5.1.3 Democracy and Citizenship

Democracy and citizenship have become a critical component of education, aiming to develop pupils' understanding of their rights and responsibilities within a democratic society. The LK20 curriculum emphasizes the importance of fostering democratic values, critical thinking, and active participation in societal issues (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 16). *The Dispossessed* is found to provide a fertile ground for exploring these themes, as it presents contrasting societal structures that challenge readers to reflect on the principles of democracy and their role as citizens.

The concept of democracy in education involves not only the knowledge of democratic processes but also the cultivation of attitudes and skills necessary for active participation in a democratic society. This includes critical thinking, empathy, and the ability to engage in reasoned debate. Klafki's Bildung framework supports these goals by promoting holistic education that integrates personal development with social responsibility. Similarly, Martha Nussbaum emphasizes the role of humanities and arts in nurturing democratic citizens who can critically evaluate societal norms and advocate for justice and equality (2006, pp. 387–388).

The Dispossessed richly illustrates these democratic ideals, its plot exploring the tension between different political ideologies through the journey of the protagonist, who navigates the contrasting systems of Anarres and Urras. Anarres, an anarchist society, promotes freedom of speech and association but faces systemic pressures that suppress dissent. Urras, a capitalist society, appears democratic but is marred by deep class divides and control. Shevek's navigation of these structures reveals the values and challenges of each system and exemplifies active citizenship and personal responsibility, which are central to the LK20's discussions of democracy and citizenship (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 16).

The curriculum further emphasizes understanding democracy's relationship with fundamental rights like free speech and association, along with the importance of balancing individual rights and obligations: “[pupils] shall understand dilemmas that arise when recognising both the preponderance of the majority and the rights of the minority.” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017, p. 16). Le Guin's novel provides a rich narrative framework for these concepts, as pupils can analyze Shevek's journey to explore the dilemmas between majority rule and minority rights, the democratic paradox, and how political ideals manifest in real-world contexts. For instance, pupils may engage with the ethical implications of Shevek's choice to engage in armed rebellion on Urras, juxtaposing it with his decision to breach the

most sacred social law by leaving Anarres. Such engagement may accommodate experiencing Bildung fundamentally in the social-ethical category through understanding the inherently symbiotic relationship between individual and society. This in turn can lead pupils to a critical understanding that their engagement with democratic society involves a balance of rights and obligations, including freedom of thought and expression and the duty of active participation. In conclusion, *The Dispossessed* expresses that active citizenship involves more than participation in sanctioned, everyday activities; it crucially requires challenging and rethinking the norms and frameworks that govern society.

5.3 Didactic Implementation: The Teacher as Mediator

Bildung as process, characterized by the double-sided opening (Klafki, 2001, p. 192), and aesthetic literary experience, characterized by continuous emotional and cognitive immersive engagement with a text (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 31), are both entirely dependent on the individual pupil. As such, Bildung and aesthetic experience can never be guaranteed, but they can be facilitated through thoughtful pedagogical practices. The role of the teacher becomes facilitating for pupils' depth of engagement by fostering the critical awareness necessary for such transformative experiences (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 25). To this end, the teacher should carefully consider the balance between facilitating organic learning through aesthetic reading and using literature as a bridge to discuss specific topics. Maintaining such a balance means to embrace the inherent affordances that fictional literature as a learning material represents. Following, this is discussed in terms of encouraging aesthetic engagement and scaffolding for critical engagement.

5.3.1 Encouraging Aesthetic Engagement

The power of aesthetic engagement in facilitating Bildung-experiences can be summarized in juxtaposition to the essence of Klafki's categorial theory of Bildung: that Bildung occurs in the mutual opening of the subjective, the pupil, and the objective, the novel, unto each other; that indeed any experience of Bildung is aesthetic. The premise of the argument for aesthetic literary engagement then, its strength and its challenge, is that in order for knowledge to result in Bildung, the learner must engage with it autonomously (Klafki, 2001, p. 190).

Through the lens of reader-response theory, *The Dispossessed* can be seen as an aesthetic space where pupils can engage with and reflect on their own societal views and

ethical standings. Because aesthetic engagement with a text is highly personal, influenced by the reader's past experiences, present needs, and personal context (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 30), respecting and appreciating the reader's individual understanding is crucial. In facilitating this process, the teacher's role shifts from merely imparting knowledge to actively assisting pupils in navigating their personal connections to the text (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 25), thereby fostering Bildung through reflective literary transactions. If the teaching focus falls too heavily on presenting the pupils with textual interpretations, this may inadvertently signal a devaluing of the pupils' personal experiences and negatively impact their perceived ability to create meaningful interactions experientially with fictional texts (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 30).

Thus, the teacher should aim to create an environment where pupils feel empowered to explore their interpretations and make personal connections to the text. This can involve encouraging open dialogue, asking probing questions, and guiding pupils to reflect critically on their responses without steering them towards a particular viewpoint. This approach not only fosters aesthetic engagement but also promotes intellectual and emotional growth, as pupils learn to communicate their perspectives and insights. In words of the LK20, pupils should be able "to express their feelings, thoughts, experiences and opinions", which can provide "new perspectives on different ways of thinking and communication patterns, as well as on the pupils' own way of life and that of others" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). Ultimately, by prioritizing the pupil's autonomous interaction with the text, teachers can cultivate a more meaningful and transformative literary experience.

5.3.2 Scaffolding for Critical Engagement

In considering the potential of *The Dispossessed* to contribute to Bildung within the LK20 framework, it is crucial to acknowledge the challenges that complex texts pose to the developmental diversity in a 10th-grade classroom. When knowledge only can result in Bildung through autonomous engagement (Klafki, 2001, p. 190), it is important to avoid using literature only as a tool to illustrate predetermined educational goals or themes. While this method can be highly effective in highlighting particular societal, ethical, or philosophical concepts, guiding pupils to specific understandings and discussions, it should not be employed to the exclusion of personal engagement and the organic discovery process that comes with aesthetic reading, as it often is in Norwegian primary education (Hennig, 2017, p. 112). On the other hand, fictional literature is uniquely suited as a medium to explore social issues through vicarious experience (Kidd & Castano, 2013, as cited in Dypedahl & Lund, 2020, p. 78; McGillis, 2006, p. 7; Nussbaum, 2006, p. 390). The analysis has shown as much

in the case of *The Dispossessed* and its ability to communicate issues relating to intercultural competence and democratic citizenship. Furthermore, such social commentary can be so integral to a narrative that opportunities for immersion and Bildung-experiences become sparse if the pupils fail to actively engage with such issues in reading. This is perhaps especially true with *The Dispossessed*, which in part was chosen as the subject of analysis precisely for its social relevance.

The LK20's curriculum for English asserts that pupils should acquire knowledge of culture and society through reflection, interpretation, and critical assessment of various types of texts (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, p. 3). It follows that fostering the pupil's ability to engage critically when working with fictional literature is an important goal for the EFL teacher. In order to achieve this while strengthening pupils' autonomy, the teacher can provide structured support that gradually leads pupils towards greater independence and deeper understanding. Following are some suggested methods teachers can use to scaffold critical engagement in their classrooms.

While exploration of autonomy and selfhood in *The Dispossessed* offers distinct opportunities for social insights, teachers should be prepared for the possible disconnect between the futuristic setting and the pupils' immediate realities. Creating relatable scenarios or linking the novel's dilemmas to current events could bridge this gap, facilitating a more meaningful engagement with the text's philosophical depth. Connecting the material to real-world contexts, examples, and relevant theories can help pupils see the broader social relevance of their reading and engage more deeply with the content. For instance, teachers might present articles on historical and contemporary figures and social movements to draw parallels with the novel's exploration of anarchist and capitalist societies. As an example, the motif of walls in *The Dispossessed* can be juxtaposed with the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall. Alternatively, if the class is one musically inclined, Shevek's longing for connection can be juxtaposed with Pink Floyd's explorations of existentialist isolation in the 1979 album *The Wall*. Introducing pupils to relevant theories can also scaffold pupils' depth of engagement with the text. For instance, discussing Marxist theory or social contract theory in the context of *The Dispossessed* can provide pupils with analytical tools to understand the novel's political and social commentary.

Assignments and classroom activities should aim to promote autonomous engagement. Open assignments provide pupils with options for how they wish to explore and present their understanding of the text. This approach not only caters to different learning styles but also encourages pupils to take ownership of their work, fostering a sense of agency and

motivation. For example, pupils could write essays, create visual art, or develop multimedia presentations that reflect their interpretations and insights. The assignments should nonetheless present criteria that require in-depth research and analysis. Group projects can be particularly effective, as they foster collaboration and collective problem-solving. For example, pupil led discussions such as the use of reading circles is a well-established method that aims to encourage autonomous engagement by minimizing teacher interference in pupils' processes of interpretation (Syed et al., 2021). This approach promotes reflective and explorative learning experiences while providing the necessary structure to deepen pupils' interactions with the text. By assigning specific roles within the reading circles, pupils not only engage more fully with the material but also develop a sense of responsibility towards their peers.

5.4 Approaching a Bildung-Theoretical Didactic Model

Despite criticisms regarding the LK20's lack of a concrete framework for Bildung (Fauskevåg, 2022), the open-ended nature of Bildung allows teachers to mediate between curricular ideals and practical realities, offering pupils meaningful learning opportunities through literature and the arts. As Weniger (1999, p. 120) emphasizes, individual teachers are the true guarantors of Bildung, bridging the gap between state objectives and pupils' lived experiences. However, understanding how to fulfill the role of guarantor of Bildung is not immediately clear.

In reflecting on Research Question 3, '*To what extent can the findings from Research Questions 1 and 2 inform a didactic model for promoting Bildung-experiences through aesthetic literary engagement?*', it becomes evident that the thesis encounters challenges in providing a definitive answer. However, the analysis of *The Dispossessed* and the subsequent discussions offer theoretical insights, particularly in demonstrating the applicability of Klafki's double-sided opening (2001, p. 192) and layers of Bildung—the exemplary, the elementary, and the fundamental (as disambiguated by Straum, 2018)—as a useful framework for delineating the educational value of engaging aesthetically with fictional literature. These results suggest that by understanding and utilizing these layers, teachers can perhaps create a more effective and engaging educational environment that nurtures Bildung.

First, educators can employ Klafki's layers of Bildung in determining the didactic relevance of literary works. The exemplary layer engages pupils with specific, didactic

examples. When selecting literary works, educators should identify texts that provide rich, relatable examples pertaining to various fundamental categories that resonates with pupils' experiences and interests. Fundamental categories can be identified with specific learning-outcomes in mind, as exemplified by intercultural competence and democratic citizenship in the analysis of *The Dispossessed*.

Second, educators can design lessons that encourage Bildung-experiences by scaffolding for critical engagement based on the relevant fundamental categories. In the example of working with *The Dispossessed*, the teacher can incorporate activities that demonstrate the concept of bias, leveraging the pupils' understanding of bias as entry into autonomous engagement with the text.

Third, educators can facilitate for pupils to experience Bildung in the fundamental and the elementary layers by understanding this process in terms of the double-sided opening and understanding in turn literary aesthetic engagement as a continuous double-sided opening. In the words of Rosenblatt:

Literature treats the whole range of choices and aspirations and values out of which the individual must weave his own personal philosophy. The literary works that students are urged to read offer not only "literary" values (...) but also some approach to life, some image of people working out a common fate or some assertion that certain kinds of experiences, certain modes of feeling, are valuable. The teacher who is aware of the potential absorption or rejection of social attitudes will be led to investigate his own role in the process. (Rosenblatt, 1995, pp. 19–20)

In conclusion, further research could indicate whether these layers are useful in providing a structured approach to developing a didactic model for aesthetic literary engagement.

6.0 Closing Remarks

This thesis has explored the potential of aesthetic engagement with speculative fiction to facilitate Bildung, a holistic educational concept emphasizing personal development, critical thinking, and societal engagement. By examining Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, the study illustrates how literature can serve as a powerful medium for holistic learning and personal development in terms of Bildung. The thesis is contextualized by highlighting the importance of aesthetic experience in education, arguing more specifically for the significant educational potential of literature.

The significance of this research lies in its engagement with existing theory, highlighting the enduring relevance of Klafki's categorial theory of Bildung and Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature, demonstrating how these theories can inform each other as holistic notions of phenomenological processes and educational goals in working with fictional literature in a didactic context. The key findings indicated how Klafki's layers of Bildung may inform a didactic model to guide teachers in the selection of material and development of lessons for facilitating pupils' experiencing of Bildung through aesthetic literary engagement.

However, the study also acknowledges its limitations. The speculative nature of the conclusions and the lack of empirical validation highlight the need for further research. Future studies could incorporate classroom observations, reader response journals, and diverse theoretical perspectives to test, substantiate and refine the proposed didactic model.

It should be noted that *The Dispossessed* primarily serves as an example. Considering how important personal interest is to aesthetic engagement, it is presented as a general recommendation that pupils are offered the freedom to choose from a varied selection of reading materials whenever possible.

In conclusion, this thesis presents possibilities for Bildung-theoretical approaches to literary education, emphasizing the transformative power of aesthetic engagement with literature. It is hoped that this research will inspire educators to integrate these principles into their teaching practices, fostering a lifelong appreciation for literature and learning among their pupils.

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