

HOW TO TEACH *THE DISPOSSESSED* BY LE GUIN?

Gassim H. DOHAL

Independent Researcher

E-mail: dr_waitme@hotmail.com

Abstract

Ursula K. Le Guin proposes two dialectical worlds in a circular pattern and non-linear structure in her novel *The Dispossessed*. She also manages to mention and critique our earth in her book. And for science fiction teachers, teaching such a novel could be a nightmare. As a result, a lesson plan is created to aid in the teaching of this novel.

Keywords: *The Dispossessed*; Le Guin; teaching science fiction.

Introduction

This lesson plan is designed for undergraduate English Literature students who are learning English as a second language. It contains a full description of what will occur in a class, including objectives, materials required, activities, procedures, conclusion, and evaluation. This lesson plan is designed to assist the instructor in becoming more organized and prepared to teach Ursula K. Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed*. This plan may, however, be altered in class to match the needs of students enrolled in a science fiction course like this and/or to meet class progress.

Objective

Students will demonstrate a general comprehension of Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* by engaging in class discussions, answering questions, and writing reports after reading the novel. They'll learn how to apply science fiction terms like novum, utopia, terraforming, ecocriticism, and other terms to the novel. Utopia, capitalism, feminism, socialism, anarchism, the parent-child bond, and male-female interactions will all be discussed. This course will also look at the novel's setting and how it critiques our social flaws.

Materials

For each session, students should read at least one chapter from *The Dispossessed*; the number of chapters read depends on the length of the chapters. They should bring the text to

the class because they will need to refer to it and/or quote from it. Additional notes may be supplied, usually to address elements and points that the students need to pay closer attention to. These notes usually represent themes from the novel, such as colonialism, family, ecology, and so on. Furthermore, some optional articles, such as Bernard Selinger's *The Dispossessed: The Artist and Politics*, and Victor Urbanowicz's *Personal and Political in The Dispossessed*, could be placed on hold.

Participation

It is imperative that students participate. Students are at the heart of learning in this strategy. This implies that the concepts they propose will be developed and addressed during the class discussion. They are encouraged to speak up about their thoughts and interests, as well as to ask questions. Allowing children to ask questions and attempting to answer them will pique their interest in reading the book. Despite the fact that the work has been chosen and assigned, the ideas and debate in class will be centered on the topics presented by the students. They have the opportunity to hit various points because there are numerous issues that will appeal to a variety of preferences, such as women's rights on both planets, the concept of sharing, family, and marriage, to name a few.

Troubles to Deal With

At the start of each class, students will be asked to share their thoughts on the assigned chapters. This does not imply that the pupils will enjoy the novel; they may enjoy only parts of it or none at all. The idea is for each student to explain why he or she believes what they believe about the novel in general and about certain key topics in particular. Their instructor's comments will be focused on the points they raise. The board will be utilized to assist the pupils in connecting their concepts.

The students may find it difficult to regard Anarres as utopian, in part because it is idealistic rather than realistic, and in part because it opposes their traditional beliefs. They may have difficulty understanding socialism or anarchism as well. Additionally, some students may struggle with the non-linear structure. However, the class discussion will assist in resolving these issues and will throw light on these themes. It is now the teacher's turn to address these issues.

Activities

The novel will be completed in at least six 90-minute sessions, each of which will be divided into two chapters, with the exception of the last class, which will be divided into three

chapters. It's possible that a seventh class will be required for revision and winding up. Each session, however, should be distributed as follows: warm-up (8-10 minutes); presentation (15-20 minutes); question/discussion (35-40 minutes); discussion (15 min.); and Conclusion (8-10 min.)-or something similar.

Methods/Procedures

The following teaching approaches are used in this lesson plan: question/discussion, presentation, discussion, and a cooperative learning task. These many strategies are intended to ensure that pupils learn and that boredom in the classroom is avoided. Using a variety of strategies and methods will aid in the creation of a learning environment.

A brief introduction to science fiction in general, and how this genre analyzes and critiques numerous daily topics and provides various options, could be helpful at the start of the first meeting. In subsequent meetings, the instructor may try to remind the students of what they discussed in the prior meeting earlier.

Each chapter will be presented to the entire class by a group of students. In addition to speech, this group can employ written notes or/and board writing. Each member is responsible for presenting an idea, a character, or anything else relevant to the assigned chapters to the class. This presentation is intended to provide students with conversation topics as well as an opportunity for individuals who present to voice their interests and viewpoints. At least two group presentations will be made throughout each session. Each talk will last between 5 and 7 minutes. Depending on the topic and its novelty, the time may be reduced.

Following that, the discussion will begin. In order to create a learning environment in the classroom, questions such as "What do you think of this chapter?" may be asked, or "As a student, what does this chapter indicate to you?" Students should be given the opportunity to voice their thoughts and speak in front of their peers. They may also make comments on the issues presented throughout the presentation. This will prompt the students to discuss topics such as utopia, characters, women, structure, and children, as well as how they interact to one another.

The instructor will make some observations in order to pique their interest. Of course, I might ask a question or bring up an incident to give them something to talk about. However, my initial questions will be broad in nature, such as: What are your thoughts on the chapter? What are the major issues addressed in this chapter? And how does the novel address and/or resolve these issues? Is it enhancing or implying any possibilities? These questions will lead to more specific notions like anarchism, socialism, and capitalism, as well as any other topics they may bring up.

Conclusion

At the end of the lesson, it is the instructor's chance to summarize what has occurred. The emphasis will be on the primary themes about which the instructor observed his or her students becoming perplexed during discussion, while taking into account their ideas and interests. It will take few minutes to complete this quick wrap-up.

After each two classes, students may be divided into three to four groups to consider a concept or theme, such as isolation, male-female relationships, exploitation, etc., and apply it to the portion of the novel that has been addressed in class thus far. It is entirely up to them. In their reports, they may use a theory or a philosophical point of view.

Each group is expected to bring a three-to-five-page report to the next class in order to keep them engaged outside of class. They must submit this report to me as part of their course evaluation. Each group must submit at least three reports by the end of the novel. They should share copies of their reports with their coworkers. The goal of this task is for students to learn more from one another and to assist one another in comprehending the book. Because the instructor may ask any group member about a point or an idea in the group's report, each student must engage in the group discussion. Each group, however, must write its members' names at the beginning of the report.

Finally, the lecturer should inquire whether there are any questions from the pupils. They must be reminded of the chapters they must read for the following class. As stated at the outset, this work will be broken into at least six parts, each with two chapters. All sessions will use the strategy and procedure described above. This technique, by the way, might be used to teach science fiction works to students from various cultures who are studying English literature.

Evaluation

The class involvement in the discussion, the students' replies and questions in class, the presentations, and the groups' assigned reports will all be used to evaluate this lesson plan. Students will be encouraged to participate in class and exhibit their personal interests. The discussion should be tailored to the interests and goals of the pupils. Their questions should be answered in class, and any relevant references or publications should be offered.

General Notes:

It's possible that notes will be distributed at different times. They are designed to assist pupils in overcoming the novel's non-linear structure. These notes could take the shape of summaries, questions, or a glossary of topics discussed in the relevant chapters.

References

- Colin, D. A. (1998). *A Modern Approach to Teaching English*. New York: Van Nostrand, Reinhold Company.
- Dohal, G. H. (2020). Susan Glaspell's 'Trifles': A Suggested Lesson Plan. *TECHNIUM Social Science Journal (TSSJ)*, 8, pp. 22-25. doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v8i1.504
- Healey, F. G. (1997). *Foreign Language Teaching in the Universities*. Manchester: Manchester UP.
- Laurence D. & P. Stillman, (Eds). (2005). *The New Utopian Politics of Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed*. New York, Oxford & Toronto: Lexington Books.
- Pinker, S. (1994). *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*. HarperPerennial.
- Selinger, B. (1988). *Le Guin and Identity in Contemporary Fiction*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Research Press.
- Thompson, D. (Ed). (1994). *Directions in the Teaching of English*. Cambridge: UP.
- Urbanowicz, V. (1978). *Personal and Political in The Dispossessed*. *Science-Fiction Studies* 5, no. 2, pp. 110–17.
- Ursula K. Le G. (2003). *The Dispossessed*. New York: Harper Collins Perennial Classics.