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Issue 12 of *Revue ITEC*, entitled “*Inclusive Education and Innovative Technologies*,” brings together a collection of scholarly contributions that explore emerging approaches, policies, practices, and innovative technologies that contribute to creating more inclusive, accessible, and learner-centred educational environments. At a time when educational systems are undergoing profound transformations, the intersection between inclusion and technological innovation has become increasingly significant.

Inclusive education extends beyond ensuring access to learning; it encompasses the creation of equitable educational environments that recognise learner diversity, reduce barriers to participation, and respond to different needs, abilities, and backgrounds. At the same time, the rapid development of digital and emerging technologies is creating new possibilities for enhancing teaching and learning, expanding access to educational resources, and responding to diverse learner needs.

The contributions in this issue address a range of topics, including inclusive education, special needs education, innovative pedagogies, teacher education and professional development, as well as the role of emerging technologies in expanding learning opportunities and addressing the diverse needs of learners. Collectively, the articles underscore the importance of combining pedagogical innovation with inclusive practices to promote equity, active participation, learner empowerment, and lifelong learning.

By bringing together perspectives from different disciplines and educational contexts, **Issue 12** seeks to contribute to current discussions on how innovation and technology can be harnessed to address contemporary educational challenges and foster more inclusive and learner-centred educational environments.

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Building Bridges Through Stories: Fiction and Utopian Literature as Pedagogical Tools for Inclusive Classroom Engagement

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Abstract

Inclusive education has been central in the educational realm in recent years. However, it has been discussed in relation to accessibility, policy, and differentiated instruction. The result is that exclusion and intolerance of difference persist. The role of literature as a pedagogical tool in fostering empathy and social inclusion has been greatly dismissed. Fiction enables students to engage emotionally with characters whose backgrounds, abilities, and worldviews differ from their own. This encourages empathy and reduces social barriers. Utopian literature, in particular, urges students to imagine alternative ways of being in the world; ways that are based on cooperation, equity, and mutual respect. Through discussions, collaborative interpretation, and reflective activities, fiction and utopian literature in particular can stimulate dialogue, instill a sense of belonging, and promote care and compassion. This paper examines the possibility of utopian and fictional literature in enhancing the development of empathy, social cohesion, and inclusive attitudes among students from diverse cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. It further highlights practices for integrating fiction and utopian narratives into inclusive classrooms. By positioning literature as a means of social connection and community building, this paper demonstrates how fictional and utopian stories can function as bridges between individuals and contribute to the creation of more inclusive classroom environments.

Keywords: inclusive pedagogy, fiction, utopian literature, classroom engagement, empathy

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of The Study

The diversity of learning styles in contemporary classrooms has made inclusive education a central priority. Whether it is cognitive disabilities, mental disabilities, differences in culture, language, or socioeconomic background, classrooms nowadays require innovative educational approaches that respond to all learners. Regardless of the progress in policies promoting inclusion, numerous educational systems struggle with issues such as social exclusion and unequal participation. These challenges show that there is a need for pedagogical practices that emphasize psychological aspects such as empathy, compassion, and mutual understanding among students.

Within the literary field, inclusion is regarded as a relational and social process that aims to build tolerance, acceptance, and collective identity. Hagar Goldberg (2022) recognizes inclusion as the

human motivational drive to be part of a group. He notes that successfully inclusive environments showcase a great sense of empathy and safety, which are important in classrooms. These emotions significantly influence students' engagement, motivation, and well-being. Inclusive classrooms are essentially places where diversity is valued, and every student feels respected and capable of contributing to the learning process. Abeera Khan (2022) argues that creating meaningful social connections is an essential condition for inclusion and therefore learning. She explains that students who experience support and acceptance are willing to participate, take intellectual risks, and engage in classroom activities (Khan,2022).

Within this context, literature emerges as a particularly valuable pedagogical resource for enhancing inclusion. Ram Krishna Chaturvedi (2011) views literature as a tool for understanding others and self-creation. Fiction and utopian narrative possess the capacity to expose students to various contexts, encouraging empathy, perspective-taking, and critical reflection. João M. Paraskeva (2022) claims that fiction is powerful because it promotes “knowledge emancipation” (p.9). This freedom extends to society and oneself. Fictional stories allow humans to free themselves from the constraints of reality and have radical imagination. Utopian literature invites learners to envision alternative ways to establish justice, cooperation, and mutual care.

1.2 Problem Statement

Inclusion is frequently regarded as providing access to public educational institutions, disregarding the relational and psychological aspects of it. As a result, learners with different cognitive abilities, cultures, and socioeconomic background receive still face exclusion, bullying, and a sense of unsafety in the classrooms. This is mainly due to the inefficiency of the pedagogical practices that aim to instill care and respect for others. At the same time, literature has always been taught as merely a subject of study, overlooking its potential in fostering social inclusion and positive values.

1.3 Objective and Significance of The Study

This study examines the pedagogical potential of fiction and utopian literature in enhancing inclusivity in educational settings. Drawing on scholarship in utopian-fictional literature, inclusive education, and narrative pedagogy, this paper explores how literary narratives can contribute to fostering empathy, compassion, social cohesion, inclusive forms of participation, and safety.

This study contributes by synthesizing research on utopian and fictional literature as pedagogies used in classrooms. Rather than treating literary narratives as texts for interpretation, the review regards fiction and utopian literature as practices capable of cultivating empathy, collaborative learning, and critical reflection. In doing so, the study fills the gap of how literary engagement can contribute to the relational and psychological dimensions of inclusion that contemporary educational research increasingly recognizes as essential. This study also offers educators practical ways of using literary narratives to promote dialogue, perspective-taking, collaborative learning, and a stronger sense of belonging among diverse learners.

1.4 Research Question

This study aims to answer one main research question: Can fiction and utopian literature be employed as pedagogical practices to develop inclusion, empathy, and a sense of belonging in contemporary classrooms? By targeting this question, this paper seeks to demonstrate that literature should be considered not merely as a subject of study but as an innovative and transformative pedagogical tool that is capable of contributing to more inclusive environments.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Inclusion beyond physical access

Inclusive education is becoming a significant priority in classrooms. Scholars insist that inclusive classes involve more than the physical presence of students within educational institutions; rather, inclusivity includes also participations of all students and access to educational priorities such as materials, resources, and services (Aliagas-Marin et al., 2024; Dermijnsbrugge & Chatelier, 2022; Salmenniemi et al., 2024). However, contemporary scholarship argues that inclusive classrooms must emphasize psychological aspects. In other words, inclusivity must be characterized by safety, empathy, and a sense of belonging (Chaturvedi, 2011; Goldberg, 2022). By valuing such psychological aspects, learners develop a genuine sense of belonging and acceptance of difference. Hence, inclusion becomes a transformative process where students can flourish both academically and emotionally. Goldberg (2022) highlights the impact of the psychological aspects on learning and human development. He explores neuroscientific studies, claiming that students' experiences of trust, safety, and extraversion are connected to their learning. In fact, "a lack of these conditions may slow down [...] the level of neuroplasticity in the developing brain. The social and cognitive safety net that enables learners to aim high while taking risks and to turn failure into resilience is rooted in safe relationships" (Goldberg, 2022, p.10). Hence, contemporary understanding of inclusion goes beyond classroom knowledge to provide the emotional and social support needed for real-life engagement. Conversely, when learners are marginalized and excluded, they are cognitively urged toward survival and creating coping mechanisms rather than focusing on growth.

Studies have also demonstrated that inclusion challenges inequality and creates justice inside the classroom. Abeera Khan (2022) and Lewis Gail (2014) discuss how prioritizing connection allows students to move beyond "toxicity of racism, misogyny, homophobia, class hatred and disablism" (Lewis, 2014, p.31). Khan (2022) names this a "reparative stance" that treats collective dependency and friendships as interconnected relationships rather than valuing hedonistic and individualistic connections. This dependency allows the recognition of various perspectives, morals, experiences, and cultures, enabling a full construction of knowledge that takes in all aspects of life. Positive relationships with teachers and peers provide a sense of security that encourages participation. Ylostalo (2024) argues that participation in inclusive classes is also enhanced by designing classes that are not competitive. This is mainly for students to feel safe experimenting with ideas and making mistakes without fear of judgment.

Curriculum plays an important role in creating an inclusive classroom. Traditional approaches fail to address different experiences and realities that can interconnect the classroom. Hence, choosing suitable curriculum and pedagogical tools that are capable of supporting inclusion requires careful selection. Within this context, utopian literature and fiction emerge as an innovative pedagogical resource that has the potential of creating spaces for dialogue, imagination, and social cohesion. Chaturvedi (2011) insists that real inclusion is established when there is a detailed and logical selection of literary texts that resonate with the diverse contexts of students. These narratives reflect multiple identities, morals, and values that are essential to learn in order to engage better in real life.

2.2 Fiction as a Pedagogy

Fiction is recently considered a transformative pedagogical tool that has the potential to extend learning beyond simple transmission of knowledge (Aliagas-Marin et al., 2024; Chaturvedi, 2011;

Houlden & Veletsianos, 2022). Fiction functions as more than a literary corpus for analyzing themes; it offers opportunities for critical reflection, imaginative exploration, and intellectual engagement. Chaturvedi (2011) reinforces this by arguing that incorporating fiction into classrooms and educational settings enables students to navigate the complexity of the world: “[b]eyond the classroom, these skills are transferable to various disciplines and real-world contexts, empowering individuals to approach challenges with a critical and analytical mindset” (p.98). Encountering numerous narratives allows students to face multiple perspectives and reflect on their own social realities as well as their position within them. Aliagas-Marin et al. (2024) move beyond paper-based fiction, claiming that in this age, teachers must use digital fiction. This view is valuable mainly in the modern age. They regard digital fiction such as video games and literary applications as an innovative way to “de-academize literature” and connect it to the lived realities of students (Aliagas-Marin et al., 2024, p. 12). Building on this discussion, fiction in its nature involves multiple semiotic codes, such as image and sound, which attracts the attention of the reader or the user in the case of digital fiction. Therefore, it becomes less intimidating and closer to involving students in the process of meaning-making. Houlden and Veletsianos (2022), in the same way as Chaturvedi (2011), advocate for the use of fiction to instil real-life skills and critical reflection. However, Houlden and Veletsianos (2022) add the aspect of radical imagination. According to them, fiction creates imagined futures and scenarios that encourage students to envision equitable and joyful futures. In this sense, the transformative power of fiction lies in its ability to invite students to understand the world and imagine ways to make it a better place for them and for future generations.

The significance of fiction is rooted in its storytelling nature. Narratives are capable of making human beings understand themselves and their relationships with others, making stories essential for the construction of meaning. Stories give individuals spaces to encounter and recreate the world surrounding them. Anson (2020) captures this understanding by claiming that humans themselves are a story; a story that is always in the making. Houlden and Veletsianos (2022) view stories as powerful tools for instilling values and agency. Despite the cultural specificity of stories, “they all to varying degrees operate with more or less power to ‘move things in the world’” (Houlden and Veletsianos, 2022, p.6). Based on these studies, it can be argued that fiction has the power to change classrooms from traditional and exclusive to innovative and inclusive. Fiction as pedagogy has the capacity to cultivate empathy and perspective-taking. Chaturvedi (2011) insists that immersing oneself in different narratives urges students to analyse various points of view. It also makes students engage with complex social and moral issues that are not always accessible through their everyday experiences. By encountering characters and situations that differ from their own realities, learners develop empathy, cultural sensitivity, and a deeper understanding of the human condition. Scientifically, neuroscience research further supports this relationship between fictional narratives and empathy. Goldberg (2022) illustrates that engaging with stories activates the ‘Default Mode Network (DMN)’ of the brain, a system associated with social cognition, the capacity to contemplate and imagine the experiences of other people, and self-reflection. Through this process, narratives unconsciously encourage learners to move beyond individualistic perspectives and develop compassionate ways of understanding. Khan (2022) complements Goldberg through his notion of reparative stance in reading, which highlights the importance of connection and relationality in educational encounters. Reparative reading encourages learners to create meaningful connections with texts and with one another. Hence, creating new possibilities for imagining more inclusive and just futures.

The pedagogical benefits of fiction are further enhanced when literary engagement becomes a collaborative practice. The study of literature acquires greater significance when students participate together in a collective interpretation and meaningful discussion. Aliagas-Marin et al. (2024) argue that working with digital fiction facilitates the creation of opportunities where students discuss common experiences and reflections. This reader-response approach transforms reading from passive to an interactive experience. Through this approach, students are required to make decisions about settings, characters, and themes, leading to further emotional and cognitive involvement with the narrative. In general, educational approaches that are grounded in Socratic discussions, collaborative learning environments, and literature circles encourage students to exchange views and negotiate meanings in a collective manner. Salmenniemi et al. (2024) suggest that imagination should be regarded as a collective practice, not as an individual disposition. Through fictional storytelling and shared narrative activities, students become conscious of the weaknesses of their own viewpoints and expand their understanding by encountering the perspectives of others. In this process, the role of the teacher is particularly important as a mediator and a guide to carefully structure discussions. The teacher is there to help students move beyond superficial interpretations and discover the complexities and possibilities embedded within fictional texts. Both Aliagas-Marin et al. and Salmenniemi et al.'s perspectives are insightful because they emphasize fiction as a pedagogical practice capable of fostering collaboration, empathy, and inclusive forms of classroom engagement.

2.3 Utopian Literature and Educational Imagination

Utopian literature is positioned within the realm of fiction since both fiction and utopian literature rely on narrative to create a desired world and both serve as “educational instruments” (Chaturvedi, 2011, p.97). However, they depart in several points. Both Van Dermijnsbrugge and Chatelier (2022) acknowledge the differences between utopian literature and fiction, claiming that while fiction takes the readers away and brings them back, utopian literature creates a state of mind that remains inconsistent with the existing order. Paraskeva (2022) writes that utopian literature prioritizes “the possibility of impossibility” to instil agency and hope (p.4). This makes it a practical method for educational and social transformation. It does not accept existing realities as inevitable or fixed; it seeks to imagine possibilities that transcend present limitations and open spaces for alternative futures. Drawing on Karl Mannheim's conception of utopia, Van Dermijnsbrugge and Chatelier (2022) argue that a way of thinking becomes utopian when it is inconsistent with existing reality and aspires to possibilities that still have not yet been realized. In this context, utopian thinking functions as a critical mode that challenges dominant assumptions and encourages individuals to envision different forms of human coexistence. This idea is strengthened by Mannheim (1936), who insists that this utopian state of mind is important when there is a desire for social change because it uses a vision from a different world which has the potential to bring about change. Van Dermijnsbrugge and Chatelier (2022) develop Ruth Levitas's concept of “utopia as method,” which emphasizes three phases of this process: archaeology, which critically explores existing visions of the good community; ontology, which questions who we are and whom we want to become; and architecture, which desires to create alternative futures in the present. Hence, utopian imagination is not detached from reality but is a transformative practice that urges educators and learners to rethink the purposes and possibilities of education itself.

Utopian thinking has the capacity to cultivate radical imagination. Salmenniemi et al. are among the few scholars who insist on the significance of imagination and link it to utopian literature. Salmenniemi et al. (2024) claim that utopia can serve as a method for expanding humans' sense of

what is possible and for invigorating collective political imagination. Similarly, Houlden and Veletsianos (2022) define radical imagination as an effort to envision institutions and a society in a way that is extremely different from how they currently exist. Such approaches challenge what Henry Giroux (2014) describes as the "institutional disimagination machine" of contemporary education (p. 14). This dis-imagination machine restricts students' ability to think beyond existing social and economic structures. Khan (2022), drawing from José Esteban Muñoz and Ernst Bloch's notion of concrete utopias, advocates a pragmatic form of hope for the future and confronts pessimism. It seeks possibilities for transformation within fractured presents. Utopian thinking therefore represents a pedagogical resource capable of fostering hope and critical consciousness by giving students the capacity to perceive reality as open to transformation rather than predetermined and broken.

Utopian literature and educational imagination significantly contribute by providing alternative visions of society. Numerous scholars argue that contemporary educational systems often reproduce neoliberal values characterized by competition, social acceleration, and various forms of exclusion (Khan, 2022; Paraskeva, 2022). In response, utopian and speculative genres provide imaginative frameworks for envisioning more equitable and more sustainable futures. Houlden and Veletsianos (2022) highlight literary genres such as solarpunk, hopepunk, and visionary fiction as powerful vehicles for imagination. Solarpunk imagines regenerative societies based on ecological sustainability, while hopepunk presents hope itself as an act of resistance against cynicism, despair, and an increasingly individualistic world. Similarly, Visionary fiction seeks to reimagine societies free from poverty, inequality, and systemic oppression by centring historically marginalized voices. Likewise, Paraskeva (2022) advocates for decolonial and post-abyssal futures that challenge Western epistemological dominance and embrace the world's onto-epistemological diversity. Salmenniemi et al. (2024) further demonstrate that students frequently imagine futures characterized by slower rhythms of life, greater freedom, and stronger communal relationships, thereby resisting the pressures of late-modern acceleration and competition. Collectively, these studies indicate the capacity of utopian literature to stimulate critical reflection on existing social arrangements and inspire more inclusive possibilities.

Utopian thinking has a transformative and innovative potential that becomes evident when applied directly to educational practice. Salmenniemi et al. (2024) conceptualize utopian pedagogy as an ethos of experimentation aimed at creating spaces for resistance, reconstruction, and collective imagination in the here and now. Through arts-based exercises such as 'Observing the Future in an Urban Space' and 'Hints of the Utopian Future,' students are encouraged to discover possibilities for change within everyday experiences and to discuss complex issues symbolically and collaboratively. Similarly, Houlden and Veletsianos (2022) advocate for speculative education fiction as a pedagogical and research method capable of disrupting conventional educational thinking and fostering more hopeful educational futures. Khan's (2022) notion of reparative pedagogy further illustrates how engagement with complex and even problematic texts can become an opportunity to imagine more just futures rather than simply reproduce existing injustices. In the field of curriculum theory, Paraskeva's (2022) Itinerant Curriculum Theory similarly calls for a permanent movement away from dominant paradigms in order to embrace marginalized epistemologies and forms of knowledge. Such approaches position education as an ongoing process of experimentation and transformation rather than a simple transmission of predetermined knowledge. Taken together, the reviewed scholarship demonstrates the importance of utopian literature and establishes it as a relational pedagogy; however, they do not highlight its suitability for creating inclusive classrooms.

Utopian literature and educational imagination possess profound implications for inclusive education because they encourage students to perceive social realities as malleable and open to collective change. Van Dermijnsbrugge and Chatelier (2022) describe this process as "minimal utopianism," whereby educators help learners recognize that existing socio-economic arrangements are neither natural nor inevitable but can be transformed through collective action and imaginative engagement. This emphasis on possibility and agency aligns closely with the goals of inclusive education, which seeks not only to accommodate diversity but also to create learning communities characterized by belonging, participation, and social justice. By inviting students to imagine alternative ways of living together and by fostering hope, critical inquiry, and collaborative meaning-making, utopian literature emerges as a powerful pedagogical resource for cultivating more inclusive, democratic, and compassionate educational environments. Rather than offering escapist fantasies, utopian narratives provide students with imaginative tools for understanding the present and envisioning more just and equitable futures.

3. Methodology

The methodological approach of critical literature review was selected because it requires exploration and deep analysis of existing literature. Unlike a systematic literature review, critical literature review goes beyond descriptive summary that follows the three phases: planning, conducting, and reporting (Zhu et al., 2018). Since this is a study that merges education, pedagogy, and fictional literature, it cannot be comprehended by a descriptive systematic review alone. A critical lens is a prerequisite to evaluate fictional and utopian literature as a functional pedagogical tool for inclusive classes. The approach chosen for this study is appropriate as it grants the ability to explore the overlooked dimension of fictional literature and how efficient it can be to enhance inclusivity in educational institutions and instil positive values in students that would allow them to engage better in the real world.

The review examined twelve peer-reviewed publications that emphasize one or more aspects of fiction, inclusive education, pedagogical innovation, or utopian literature. Overall analysis informed all twelve publications, but emphasis was placed on five studies; they provided the most comprehensive theoretical and pedagogical arguments relevant to the objectives of this study. They also served as the primary analytical foundation for the discussion, while the remaining publications were used to broaden and contextualize themes. The literature chosen varied from articles, conference papers, case studies, and pedagogical reports. Publications were selected based on the following criteria:

Table 1*Eligibility Criteria***Criteria for Selection**

1. Publications that address speculative futures and curriculum theory.
2. Publications that explore the use of fiction or utopian literature as pedagogical tools for teaching.
3. Publications that address inclusive education.
4. Publications from 2020 onwards to ensure that the review reflects current developments in inclusive pedagogy.

For the exclusion criteria, studies that did not address the relationship between literature and education, lacked relevance, or duplicated arguments already represented in the selected corpus were not prioritized during the analytical process.

The criteria favoured thematically relevant publications that contribute to the article's conceptual and theoretical analysis rather than mere empirical studies. Priority is also given to recent literature, 2020 and beyond, despite the limited number of relevant works because of the specificity of the topic. The literature search was conducted using major academic databases, including ERIC, Web of Science, Scopus, Springer, and Google Scholar. To ensure relevance, the search process followed a combination of keywords such as: Inclusive education, utopian and fictional literature, literature-based pedagogy, and educational imagination. These keywords were selected because they reflect the conceptual focus of the study and enabled the intersection of educational research and literary studies.

The works identified for this chapter were examined through a thematic critical analysis. To follow through this analysis, this study identified arguments and recurring concepts across the corpus and synthesized them into themes. This enabled this chapter to account for the possibility and significance of using fiction and utopian literature as practical resources for inclusive classrooms. This enables the literature to converse, pointing to the importance of including utopian literature and fiction in curriculum and as practices in classes. Following a critical literature review approach, the critical-analytical strategy discloses how this form of literature, when its texts are carefully selected, can address inclusion and raise compassion and empathy in students.

4. Findings and Discussion

The thematic analysis reveals that utopian and fiction literature are significant pedagogical resources for fostering fully inclusive classrooms. This analysis followed recurring concepts and themes that were organized into four major themes: (1) fiction as a tool for developing compassion, empathy, and values; (2) the role of fiction and utopian literature in fostering collaborative learning; (3) the significance of fiction and utopian literature in encouraging critical reflection; (4) the contribution of fiction and utopian literature in the creation of more inclusive classrooms. Through this thematic synthesis, the aim is to provide an understanding of how utopian literature and fiction can be used as pedagogical practices that foster belonging, empathy, and inclusive community. These themes do not function independently; rather, they collectively demonstrate how fiction and utopian literature contribute to inclusive education.

On the first theme, the capability of fiction to develop learners' empathy and their capacity to tolerate and understand differences is a consistent finding throughout the literature. When students engage with different narratives or fictional-utopian texts that promote compassion and understanding of differences, they recognize that there are experiences and social realities that differ from their own. This has already been clearly discussed by Chaturvedi (2011) and

scientifically reinforced by Goldberg (2011). They claimed that immersion in various narratives allows students to grapple with complex moral issues. This occurs when students invest their emotions in the narrative, which activates their social cognition that urges the contemplation of the experiences of others. While both scholars discussed the value that fictional literature can add to educational settings, they did not explore the potential of these utopian and fictional narratives in creating fully inclusive educational environments. However, their findings suggest that these narratives are an effective tool for nurturing emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, and compassion. For inclusive education, this is essential as it enables students to move beyond stereotypes that hinder inclusion. Hence, develop respectful relationships with their classmates.

Once emotional ties are established, social relationships and a sense of belonging among learners are also strengthened. As a result, a sense of safety is established, encouraging students to participate and even include the learners who isolate themselves. The reviewed literature showcases classroom activities that can be used to enhance interpersonal connections through fictional literature such as shared storytelling, collaborative reading, and collective dialogues. Aliagas-Marin et al. (2024) add digital narratives as another interactive form of fiction that is suitable in this age of technology. It encourages participation mainly for ADHD students who might remain distracted or disengaged. This form of narrative takes into account the different learning styles of students. This fosters a sense of belonging and safety, which are significant conditions for meaningful learning. In this way, aside from the values and morals that fiction and utopian literature communicate, they also build strong classroom environments through emotional connection, safety, trust, and shared space for conversation.

Critical reflection is another pedagogical value that utopian narratives possess. This is mainly because they urge students to reflect and question the existing realities and why they are not similar to the utopian worlds. Therefore, learners are encouraged to imagine alternative possibilities and even solutions to make the world a better place. While Mannheim (1936) regards utopian literature as inconsistent with reality, he does not recognize that the extreme duality of real and unreal is what urges questions to arise and critical reflection to take place. When students begin to create hopeful futures for the real world, they develop what Houlden and Veletsianos (2022) name as radical imagination. This imagination enables students to envision the world not as it is without reflection but as what it might be if certain issues, such as inequality, exclusion, and injustice, disappeared. This allows students to realize that existing systemic issues are open to change rather than accepting them as fixed. In fragmented and uncertain communities, students face difficulties in imagining alternatives to current social and educational systems. Utopian literature provides the possibility to overcome this sense of inevitability by encouraging learners to think creatively about equality, justice, inclusion and various ways of living together.

Previous studies demonstrate that literature-based activities, including shared reading, collaborative storytelling, speculative exercises, and digital narratives, shift students to active participants in the process of learning and meaning-making. Learners become creators of knowledge rather than passively consuming information. They become individuals who connect personal experiences with various and broader social concerns; they imagine possibilities for social change. These findings have important implications for inclusive pedagogy. This is mainly because they challenge passive transmissive models of education that marginalize student voices and experiences. Fiction and utopian literature encourage pedagogical activities and practices that emphasize the psychological well-being of students; this form of literature is grounded in dialogue, participation, and collective imagination, creating educational environments where students feel

empowered to contribute meaningfully to the learning community. However, literary narratives should not be regarded solely as curricular content but as innovative pedagogical resources capable of fostering empathy, belonging, agency, and more inclusive forms of classroom engagement. To achieve this goal, teachers must highlight the content and themes of fictional and utopian literature for better engagement.

5. Conclusion

Fiction and utopian literature are both valuable pedagogical resources that have the potential to ensure an inclusive classroom. While scholars such as Mannheim (1936) view this form of literature as escapist entertainment, these narratives provide meaningful opportunities for students to cultivate empathy and engage in critical reflection about themselves and the societies they inhabit. In fact, it is also considered a form of de-academization for students, mainly young learners, to create a sense of familiarity and safety. Shared reading experiences, collaborative storytelling, and imaginative creation of alternative futures are all ways to use fiction and utopian literature to create spaces for dialogue, a sense of belonging, safety, and trust. Such literary practices encourage learners to appreciate differences, strengthen interpersonal relationships between students, and participate actively in educational institutions. Utopian narratives invite students to envision more hopeful futures, nurturing optimism, agency, respect, understanding, and creative imagination. In diverse classrooms, these capacities are essential for building cohesive community. While this study highlights the possibility of using fiction and utopian literature for inclusive educational settings, future research should target the implementation of literature-based pedagogy in different inclusive educational institutions. Collecting quantitative data about the impact of utopian literature on students' sense of belonging and inclusivity is another gap that future research could address.

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