

Elin Estenstad Nilsen

Seussville: Graphic literature, Capitalism, and the Production of Critical Thinking in EAL Education

Master's thesis in Primary and Lower Secondary Teacher Education
for Years 5-10

Supervisor: Tom Nurmi

May 2024



Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

Elin Estenstad Nilsen

Seussville: Graphic literature, Capitalism, and the Production of Critical Thinking in EAL Education

Master's thesis in Primary and Lower Secondary Teacher Education
for Years 5-10

Supervisor: Tom Nurmi

May 2024

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences

Department of Teacher Education



Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

Abstract

Literature can be a great tool for understanding complicated societal processes, as well as for learning languages. In particular, it can be used to reflect on the economic and political system of capitalism. Literature gives insight into this processes, and especially graphic texts have qualities that allow for reflection on implications and consequences of these processes, both for the individual and broader society. Building upon this framework, the aim of this thesis is to examine how capitalism is portrayed in selected texts of graphic literature for pedagogical applications. Focusing on *The Sneetches* (1961), *Horton Hears a Who* (1954) and *The Lorax* (1971), all written by Dr. Seuss, I analyze these texts in the light of its portrayal of capitalism, as well as language learning potentials. To do so, I am drawing on theories of poetics, multimodality, and capitalist critique, as well as critical visual methodologies that support the LK20 learning outcomes of autonomy, societal awareness, and responsibility.

Key words: Economy; class; capitalism; graphic literature; multimodality; qualitative comparative analysis; in-service teacher interviews; EAL classroom

Sammendrag

Litteratur kan være et godt verktøy for å forstå kompliserte samfunnsprosesser, samt for å lære språk. Spesielt kan det brukes til å reflektere over kapitalisme som et økonomisk og politisk system. Litteraturen gir innsikt i disse prosessene, og spesielt grafiske tekster har kvaliteter som gir rom for refleksjon over implikasjoner og konsekvenser av disse prosessene, både for den enkelte og for det større samfunnet. Med utgangspunkt i dette rammeverket er målet med denne oppgaven å undersøke hvordan kapitalisme fremstilles i utvalgte tekster av grafisk litteratur for pedagogiske anvendelser. Gjennom å bruke *The Sneetches* (1961), *Horton Hears a Who* (1954) og *The Lorax* (1971), skrevet av Dr. Seuss, skal jeg analysere disse tekstene i lys av deres fremstilling av kapitalisme, så vel som deres språklæringspotensiale. For å gjøre det, trekker jeg frem teorier om poesi, multimodalitet og kritikk av kapitalisme, samt visuelle og kritiske metoder som underbygger læringsutbytte i LK20 koblet til autonomi, samfunnsbevissthet og ansvar.

Nøkkelord: Økonomi; klasse; kapitalisme; grafisk litteratur; multimodalitet; kvalitativ sammenligningsanalyse; intervju av yrkesaktive lærere; engelsk som tilleggspråk

Acknowledgements

As my time at the teacher education program has come to an end, I would firstly like to sincerely thank my supervisor, Tom Nurmi. Thank you for always making time to listen to my concerns and for providing me with helpful guidance. Your knowledge and support have been very valuable to me, and it has been a true pleasure having you as my supervisor. I would also like to thank the other lecturers for giving me valuable knowledge over the years, and the participants that made this thesis possible.

Further, I would also like to thank to my friends at NTNU who made these five years go by in the blink of an eye. Thank you for sharing this process of writing and learning with me and for giving me the support I have needed when embarking on this journey. Your future students and colleagues will be very lucky to have you.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my family and friends. Thank you for being my supporters, listening to me talk about my field of interest for hours and for providing me with encouraging words.

May 2024, Trondheim

Elin E. Nilsen

Table of Contents

Abstract	v
Sammendrag.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
List of figures	xi
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background and context	1
1.2 Purpose and Research Questions	2
1.3 Thesis overview	2
2 Theoretical framework	3
2.1 Poetics and EAL teaching	3
2.2 Multimodality and EAL teaching.....	4
2.3 Capitalism and education	5
2.3.1 Dr. Seuss and teaching capitalism.....	8
3 Research Methodology	9
3.1 Introduction	9
3.1.1 Terminology.....	9
3.2 Research design.....	10
3.2.1 Qualitative method.....	10
3.2.2 Credibility of findings	11
3.2.3 Data collection.....	11
3.2.4 Sikt research process.....	12
3.3 Visual methodology	12
3.3.1 Multimodality	13
3.3.2 Vision vs. visibility.....	13
3.3.3 Critical thinking	13
3.3.4 Language learning.....	14
4 Analysis of Research Findings.....	14
4.1 Introduction	16
4.2 The Sneetches	16
4.3 Horton hears a who	21
4.4 The Lorax.....	24
5 Discussion of Research Findings.....	29
5.1 Interview findings.....	29
5.2 Central ideas and opportunities for learning	31
5.3 Teaching Dr. Seuss	33

6 Conclusion 36
6.1 Main findings 36
6.2 Limitations and suggestions for further research 37
List of references 38
Appendices 40

List of figures

Figure 1: Image from <i>The Sneetches</i> (Seuss, 1961, p. 3).....	16
Figure 2: Image from <i>The Sneetches</i> (Seuss, 1961, p. 2).....	17
Figure 3: Image from <i>The Sneetches</i> (Seuss, 1961, p. 4).....	18
Figure 4: Image from <i>The Sneetches</i> (Seuss, 1961, p. 17 & 18).....	19
Figure 5: Image from <i>The Sneetches</i> (Seuss, 1961, p. 8).....	20
Figure 6: Image from <i>Horton Hears a Who</i> (Seuss, 1954, p. 19).....	21
Figure 7: Image from <i>Horton Hears a Who</i> (Seuss, 1954, p. 14 & 15).....	22
Figure 8: Image from <i>Horton Hears a Who</i> (Seuss, 1954, p. 18).....	22
Figure 9: Image from <i>The Lorax</i> (Seuss, 1971, p. 5).	24
Figure 10: Image from <i>The Lorax</i> (Seuss, 1971, p. 14).....	25
Figure 11: Image from <i>The Lorax</i> (Seuss, 1971, p. 56).....	25
Figure 12: Image from <i>The Lorax</i> (Seuss, 1971, p. 25).....	26
Figure 13: Image from <i>The Lorax</i> (Seuss, 1971, p. ii & iii).....	27
Figure 14: Economy and diversity findings from interviews.....	29
Figure 15: Graph of literature findings from interviews.....	30

List of Abbreviations

EAL	English as an additional language
LK20	the Knowledge Promotion Reform (Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet 2020)
Dr. Seuss / Seuss	Theodor Seuss Geisel

1 Introduction

In this section, I present the background of my thesis and give context to my chosen topics. I explain the current situation in Norway in regard to societal norms connected to personal and public economies, and why I believe that there is a gap in education that should and could be filled. Furthermore, I present the purpose of the thesis and my research questions before giving a brief overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background and context

In Norway, economy, class, and capital are often not discussed. It is a topic one is taught to not bring up, and it is considered strange or even rude to ask others about their opinions on these subjects or to discuss them in general. It is interesting that economy and class is ignored and invisible in a country that has a deep commitment to social welfare and is plugged into the global economy. In addition, we live in a world where immigration and diversification is rising. This, like most other aspects of our society, is closely connected to capital, which affects the social population, demographics, and immigration. Based on the unspoken nature of these topics, as well as our increasingly diverse and global society, it is particularly interesting to bring economy, class, and capital into language-learning environments such as the EAL classroom through the writing of authors like Theodor Geisel, or Dr. Seuss.

Dr. Seuss is an American children's-book author who is known for his unique work where different fictional characters face different problems in made-up universes that reflects our own world. According to the Norwegian encyclopedia Store Norske Leksikon, SNL, over one hundred million copies of his work has been sold worldwide and have been translated to around twenty different languages (Viggen, 2023). In other words, his work is popular and is globally acknowledged as fascinating and engaging. The three graphic texts I have chosen to analyze from his collection are *The Sneetches* (1961), *Horton Hears a Who* (1954) and *The Lorax* (1971), all of which contain elements of economic critique and encourages critical thinking.

Historically, economy can be found as a theme in literature. Examples are Karl Marx (1844) who critiques capitalism as an ideology and as a system, Fredrich Engels (1933) who comments on the place of the individual and a false understanding of capitalism, and Slavoj Žižek (1989) who reflects on our understanding of – and participation – in the capitalist-societal system. As we see, the topic of economy and capital keeps reappearing through history and still appears today.

Furthermore, as the chosen texts are graphic literature, they provide unique opportunities for both language learning and exploring themes connected to economy and class. The visual elements of the pictures combined with textual support provides a reading experience that scaffolds understanding, reflection and engagement. One of the aspects of literature pedagogy is the focus not just on themes but also on poetics. Poetics here can be defined as "the principles and forms of poetry or the study of these, esp. as a form of literary criticism» (Collins Dictionary, n.d.). In this particular case, the poetics in Seuss's work have connections to language understanding, language production and engagement. These elements all are necessary to bring into classroom education, which has positive implications for student learning outcomes. The graphic texts also possess other features that are worth exploring, such as multimodality that bridges the world between text and visuality.

1.2 Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how graphic literature can be employed as tools in the EAL classroom, both in relation to language learning and for producing critical thinking and economic critique. I also aim to investigate the experiences of using graphic literature in relation to teaching about economy and diversity based on interviews of a small selection (4) of in-service teachers in Norway. To address the purpose of this thesis, I have formulated two research questions:

1. What are the roles of economics and capitalism in the pedagogical practices of EAL in Norway?
2. How can graphic literature be a teaching tool in the EAL classroom to meet language goals and LK20 outcomes, while also producing critical thinking and economic critique in young learners?

1.3 Thesis overview

This thesis consists of six chapters in total, the first being this introductory chapter. The next chapter, Chapter Two, consists of the theoretical framework that has been employed to analyze my chosen graphic literature. The third chapter is my research methodology, where I handle questions about my terminology and credibility of findings. After the methodology comes my fourth chapter, which is my analysis of the three graphic texts. In my fifth chapter I discuss these findings in light of my chosen theory from the theoretical framework and in light of my two research questions. Finally, the sixth and last chapter consists of a summary of my main findings along with a discussion on the limitations of the thesis and suggestions for further research.

2 Theoretical framework

The following chapter on theoretical framework presents the theory I have chosen to employ to explore and analyze my selection of three graphic texts. To do so I have chosen to draw on theory regarding poetics and language learning, in addition to multimodality and its benefits for language learning and textual comprehension. Further, I outline the theory connected to teaching capitalism in an educational setting before looking at education on capitalism with Dr. Seuss's work specifically.

2.1 Poetics and EAL teaching

One of the qualities in Dr. Seuss's literature that makes his writing distinctive is the way poetry is used to convey the stories. As stated by Precious McKenzie (2021), Dr. Seuss, one of the most popular writers for young children, deliberately incorporates poetic devices to teach reading and the pleasure of learning how to read. (p. 37). Elements such as rhyme and rhythm change the way the story is read and gives the reader a unique experience, aiming to promote positive reading experiences and inspiring literary encounters for children. Based on this, it is important to look at theory connected to poetics and EAL education to establish how, and in what way, poetry can be a positive attribution to language learning and more general education. One could argue that the use of poetry in education has two main goals: making reading enjoyable and critical and promoting language learning which contains grammatical and lexical knowledge.

As previously stated, poetics is a valuable teaching tool in EAL education. McKenzie (2021) writes that "Poetic techniques, including alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme, and meter (rhythm or beat), provide a scaffold system to support emergent readers. Picture books, especially those that include these poetic elements, help students hear tunes and patterns, and help them learn to read in print form" (Goouch & Lambirth, 2011, in McKenzie, 2021, p. 32). Scaffolding is an important learning structure that allows students to maintain support in their language learning. For example, the use of rhythm and rhyme can help support correct pronunciation by acting as a guide. Rhymes are especially important and well-known aspects of Dr. Seuss's literature. This feature is used throughout his stories and creates a rhythm and a flow that work as a scaffold for the children when reading. This idea is supported by Goouch and Lambirth, who state that "Moving from lullabies and nursery rhymes, the poetic technique of rhyme is perhaps one of the most effective ways to nurture emergent literacy skills because "the repetition, predictable rhymes, patterns and refrains will provide a structure on which children learn to depend" (Goouch and Lambirth, 2011, in McKenzie, 2021, p. 36). As we can see here, the rhymes help foster language learning. In addition, the rhymes are often made using made-up names such as "The Sneeches", "Sylvester McMonkey McBean", "The Lorax" and "The Whos". This makes the stories unpredictable and unconventional, which children find enjoyable. It is safe to claim that the way Dr. Seuss structures his stories in terms of rhyme and rhythm is positive both in terms of language learning and engagement.

As Dr. Seuss's literature is discussed, dissected, and reflected upon, *engagement* is a reoccurring term. For the students to be able to want to reflect on and explore literature, it is crucial that they find the literature interesting and engaging. The goal is for the literature to motivate the students to look for themes or topics within the story in ways that they could employ to reflect their own lives or the lives of those around them.

As stated in the competence aims after 7th grade in the Norwegian curriculum LK20, "The teacher shall facilitate for pupil participation and stimulate the desire to learn by using a variety of strategies and learning resources to develop the pupils' reading skills and oral and writing skills in a variety of situations" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). Here, we can see that creating engagement and motivation for the students is important for the facilitation of language learning. Yet the term *engagement* itself can be difficult to address. This is because it is hard, though not impossible, to do research on something that cannot be measured quantitatively. But there is theory on the field that explains how motivation or engagement might be pursued by the teacher.

Ginsberg's (2005) article on motivation explores how bringing culture into the classroom can foster motivation. She writes that "The cultural experiences of students significantly impact how they respond to classroom experiences." (p. 218). This means that all students bring culture into the classroom and that their culture has an impact on what we are motivated by and how. She continues to write that "Classrooms are likely to be more effective in developing the capacity of students from a broad range of backgrounds if teachers understand how culture can shape learning and how teachers can develop classrooms that tap into the intrinsic motivation of culturally diverse learners" (p. 218) In other words, how teachers bring culture into the classroom is one element that might impact motivation and engagement. It might appear as a topic on its own or as connected to other topics such as economy. This is because these topics are somewhat codependent on each other, meaning it is hard to talk about one of them without exploring the other.

Arda Arikan (2002) has conducted research on the topic of critical media literacy in the ESL/EFL classrooms. He sheds light on the dramatic shift from traditional learning techniques to ways of learning that embrace the world outside and prepare the learner for using language as an rehearsal for real life (p. 115). To prepare students for participation in the real society one needs to implement literature and lessons that bring up topics that help form the student's world view. For instance, bringing economy and capitalism into the classrooms as topics are important because they help students understand the working socioeconomic structures in the society they are participating in. With the implementation of literature that meet these criteria, engagement comes into play as an active term. This is because gaining skills to use in the real world might act as a motivator to learn and engage in these activities or lessons. Seeing how the things you are learning in education are valuable, and how they can be transformed into skills you need to navigate the world, is a strong motivator because there is a clear purpose and reward.

2.2 Multimodality and EAL teaching

Multimodality refers to the combination of multiple modes, such as image and text, which is the case in Dr. Seuss' literature. The different modes work together to create meaning, which suggests that multimodal literature should be analyzed as a whole entity while also looking at how the different modes impact the meaning and the audience's perception of the story. Magnusson & Godhe (2019) write that "Meaning-making in language education, as well as in school in general, need to be based on a non-hierarchical, inclusive view of modes and media to create a readiness and flexibility in unison with the demands of a rapidly changing society." (p. 134). Here, we can see that creating meaning out of different modes is a skill that could be considered important for societal participation. Magnusson & Godhe continue: "Recognizing how students consume and produce meaning and raising students' and teachers' awareness of the

purpose of different kinds of available designs is essential to develop the meaning-making abilities that students need in order to become active citizens in the society of today and tomorrow.” (p. 134). Meaning-making is an essential skill for navigating the world today. If we do not interpret and make sense of what others are telling us, the communication becomes insufficient, but an important part of communication is to interpret what is *not* being said, such as looking at body language and the meaning behind words. Elmfeldt & Erixon (2004, in Magnusson & Godhe, 2019) state that “A commonly agreed-upon conceptualization of language subjects is that writing is considered to belong to the language subjects, while other modes, such as visual and audio, adhere to other, more practical or esthetical subjects” (p. 134). In other words, the traditional view is that visual modes should not be a part of language learning. Based on the theory discussed earlier in this section, I would argue that different modes are important part of language subject didactics. Not only do they provide a scaffold for language acquisition, but in many ways prepare students for effective communication, and therefore also societal participation.

Furthermore, it is important to note that visuality is a key mode of social literacy in the 21st century. As our society and technology has evolved, visuality has become more and more present and apparent around us. Students, like the rest of our population, are faced with the visual mode of communication in many aspects of their lives and encounter this on a regular basis. Today, literacy concerns not just written texts. Effective communication is also visual, and therefore students need to be aware of how images are constructed and used. The aim of this competency is not only to expose and teach students about the process of marketing and consumerism but also to give them the tools to create meaning and participate in effective communication. This is a way of preparing students for meeting and interacting with the society surrounding them.

Frank Serafini states that children are inundated with visual images through their home environment even before they learn how to walk and talk and that educators need to help students understand how multimodal ensembles work to capture our attention and influence our decisions (Serafini & Gee, 2014, p. 3). This means that even though the multimodal literature being analyzed does not teach us this directly through the storyline, we can utilize our analytical skills and transfer them into other aspects of our lives. For example, the constant pressure of commercials, ads and product placement can be hard to navigate if you do not have the skills or ability to understand the purpose and goal of the companies and potential outcomes for both the individual and surrounding society. This brings us to the topic of economy and class and how it is embedded into education.

2.3 Capitalism and education

Cambridge dictionary defines capitalism as an economic and political system in which property, business, and industry are controlled by private owners rather than by the state, with the purpose of making a profit (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) Capitalism is present to some degree in almost every part of the world and is intertwined into most aspects of our lives. Students are constantly affected by corporations and people that aim to entice consumers to buy products, which allows them to expand their consumer demographic and make profit. Ads and commercials are typical tools that try to persuade and influence the audience to spend money, but our society today also allows marketing to be present in less transparent ways. For example, brands use celebrities to wear or use products to gain exposure for their brand. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for companies, brands, or items to appear in TV-shows, books or even songs. Students are

constantly influenced and made part of consumer culture without even being aware it is happening, which is something that will be developed further when looking at historical theorists' view on capitalism. It is important for children who can be easily persuaded and targeted to learn to question intentions and to know the system that lies behind what we are witnessing and being exposed to. Yet, in doing this, we face a dilemma. Schools and our educational system are a part of the capitalist society that we also critique. How can one be critical to capitalism from within a structure funded that same system?

Nick Stevenson (2010) describes the educational dilemma of teaching capitalism: "(...) the application of communicative action to the sphere of education and learning requires the facing of a central educational dilemma. This is concerned with the teacher's and educational authorities' role in the setting of a curriculum and authority within the classroom and the attempt to develop critical citizens who are capable of making autonomous judgments." (p. 85). Stevenson highlights the challenge of creating a balance between what the school system aims for the students to learn and how much freedom students should have to think freely and make their own choices. On one hand we as teachers aim to create informed citizens that confirm to societal norms and values, but at the same time another goal is to create free-thinking individuals that make autonomous decisions. We teach our students that we all are equal and all worth the same, but we also encourage students to educate themselves and make smart "investments". The dilemma is that smart investments are investments that yield financial returns and therefore contribute to capitalism's ongoing inequalities.

The fact that students are encouraged to participate in our capitalist society is not negative, but one can argue that contributing to capitalism in a way is the same as contributing to inequality. This is because capitalism allows a small part of the population to own a substantial amount of the wealth in circulation, while most of the society are left to split what is left. The capitalist mode of production may also contribute to inequality in the sense that money is power, and this power can be used to influence our society in, for example, politics that will favor the interests of those who are economically wealthy. Based on these repercussions, our society faces an educational dilemma when it comes to the classroom. "There is then an inevitable "tug of war" between the requirements of autonomous learning and the systemic requirements of society that ultimately means it cannot be "neutral" concerning what children are taught" (Stevenson, 2010, p. 85). It is important to add that capital is not an isolated system, but the foundational grammar of various forms of modern problems.

Even though capital and capitalism are centered on money and economy, they also shape the way we think about human beings. In contemporary society, one might for example look at students or education as "investments". Our society invests in students by spending money on their education, so they can become a part of our labor market and in that sense "pay" society back. This is a very transactional way of looking at the way the educational system and societal structure works, and it is also something one might have a hard time critiquing as a teacher. This is because we are contributors within this system and in a sense are tools that allow this to happen. It is however important to point out that we belong to a society that consider human beings as resources or investments. This influences the way we view and treat each other. Our language and thinking are structured around how our economic system works. At some point, the structure of our community becomes not only the way society works but also the way we think. Discussions and questions about for example immigration or

indigenous people might suddenly be centered around resources, transactions and economy, and not about them as human beings.

Moreover, Alisha M.B. Heinemann & Lilia Monzó (2021) point towards the fact that capitalism, race, and migration are tied together. They argue that adult education on racialized capitalism is especially important because it contains people who have not gotten proper education as children:

We will argue in this article that adult education is especially important to the maintenance of a racialized capitalism because the majority of those who enter adult education programs are those who have been “failed” by the opportunity structures that is supposed to support social mobility within the basic school education system (p. 66).

Although I agree with this, I will argue that it is useful to also bring discussion education on racialized capitalism into children’s EAL education. This is because children will grow up to affect the society at some point. Learning about this critique is also important for societal participation and having a realistic world view for the understanding of societal and economic processes. One needs to focus on both educating those who have not have the opportunity to learn about these structures and on educating the leaders of tomorrow to ensure that those who are enrolled in the education system get adequate knowledge on the topic.

Historically, many philosophers have shared their reflections and views on capitalism, society and how we as humans are affected by these processes. Fredrich Engels (1933) stated that “Ideology is a process which of course is carried on with the consciousness of the so-called thinker but with a false consciousness. The real driving forces which move him, he remains unaware of, otherwise it would: not be an ideological process. He therefore imagines false or apparent driving forces.” (p. 341) Engels brings forward the idea that humans have a false consciousness in the sense that we believe we are in control of what ideologies we are surrounded by, while we are unaware that we are very much re driven by these ideologies. For example, one might have a sense of understanding of how capitalism works as a process, at the same time as being unaware of how one’s own actions contribute to the process or are affected by it in a bigger picture.

Karl Marx is also a well-known for his contributions to political and labor theory. He writes that:

The product of labour is labour which has been congealed in an object, which has become material: it is the objectification of labour. Labour’s realization is its objectification. In the conditions dealt with by political economy this realization of labour appears as loss of reality from the workers; objectification as a loss of the object and object-bondage: appropriation as estrangement, as alienation. (1844, 1972, p. 71-72)

Here, Marx states that labor is produced into an object created by man and that the labor is concealed within this object. This leads to alienation for the worker. The employer now owns the product, not the worker, which leads to a loss of “reality” for the worker. Marx is clearly echoing the false consciousness mentioned by Engels (1933), as the worker might not see themselves as a piece in the puzzle and understand how the work that they do are used to influence the society after its making.

Slavoj Žižek (1989) agrees that there is a false consciousness in contemporary capitalist societies, but he also believes that humans *are* aware of this happening: "Cynical reason is no longer naive, but is a paradox of an enlightened false consciousness: one knows the falsehood very well, one is well aware of a particular interest hidden behind an ideological universality, but still one does not renounce it." (Žižek, 1989, p. 25-26). Here, we can see that Žižek believes that humans are alert to false consciousness, in the sense that we know about the hidden interests in our society, but we choose not to question them. As one can see, there are different ways of examining and assessing the individual human beings' part in the bigger society, but as false consciousness is something that reappears, it is something to reflect on and take into consideration when teaching capitalism. Even though this might not be productive to bring into the classroom, I believe that the theory displays ways of thinking that can foster reflection for teachers about how one chooses to speak about, and teach, the topic of economy and capitalism in education. Regardless, many of these ideas are brought into the classrooms through Dr. Seuss's literature. Therefore, it is important to assess his place in education.

2.3.1 Dr. Seuss and teaching capitalism

As stated by Phillip Nel in 2003, Dr Seuss's name and characters have after his death been used to promote items such as cereal, credit cards and action figures, which has led many to contrast Seuss's financial legacy with his personal indifference to money and reluctance to exploit his characters for commercial gain (p. 579). In other words, Dr. Seuss's work largely contributes to capitalism, which goes against many of the morals and themes in his stories. One term that is important when discussing the work of Dr. Seuss in the light of capitalism is "Disneyfication." Karen Klugman defines 'Disneyfication' as "the application of simplified aesthetic, intellectual or moral standards to a thing that has the potential for more complex and thought-provoking expression" (Klugman, 1995, in Nel, 2003, p. 103). This means that a story is simplified, taking away from the complexity, originality, and depth. Why does one choose to do this? The answer is simple: profit. Disneyfication leads to commercial gain. In a way, one can claim that the story is being exploited. Others might say that Disneyfication makes the stories more popular, making them reach a bigger audience and hence reproducing moral values for more people. The question one is left with is: does commercializing a story take away from the message, or can one do both? Dr. Seuss is interesting because he does both, showing us how deeply we are entangled in the work of capital at the same time functioning as a commercial gold-mine.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim for the methodology section is to describe and define methodology and methods used in relation to the master's research project "*Seussville: Graphic literature, Capitalism, and the Production of Critical Thinking in EAL Education*". Before looking at research design, it is important to address why exploring graphic literature and socioeconomic diversity is relevant, and why an emphasis on these subjects is an important addition to meeting learning objectives related to EAL education.

The competence aims after year 10 for English in the English subject curriculum LK20 expect the pupils to be able to explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). Using graphic literature and the power of images, students can be exposed to new ways of living and thinking, which opens up a discussion about diversity. Visual literature can be a tool that allows for learning opportunities, such as learning to understand the world around us. For example, Dr. Seuss has written several graphic texts that allow the students to reflect on questions related to, for example, identity and diversity. As we have seen, the Dr. Seuss stories are also unique in their linguistic properties and provide opportunities in terms of language learning.

The relevant central values (2020) in LK20 explain how the English subject should help the students develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns, as well as prepare them for an education and societal working life that requires competence in reading, writing and oral communication. Economy is something that affects everyone and that has an impact on our social lives and participation in the community around us. Understanding how socioeconomic diversity is maintained, and how it shapes both society and our personal identities, helps students get a wider perspective on both the world around them and their own position within it. The central values also state that the teacher should develop the pupil's understanding that the views of the world are culture dependent. A discussion on socioeconomics would be useful in this instance because it shows how different matters such as economy and culture have a causal relationship and influence each other. I also feel the need to point out how the topic of graphic texts and socioeconomics is underdeveloped, as it is not a part of the Norwegian discourse. Therefore, research on this field can have benefits for education. I believe that both education on graphic literature and socioeconomic diversity are great tools in the classroom that have many positive outcomes when it comes to meeting curricular learning objectives.

3.1.1 Terminology

In the methodology, I have aimed to use theory on both picturebooks and graphic novels together. It is therefore necessary to look at the two terms both separately and together, to explore how the theory on both terms can be applied in this thesis.

In the book *Reading Children's Literature; A Critical Introduction* by Carrie Hintz & Eric L. Tribunella (2019), one definition of a picturebook is "a narrative or non-narrative book in which words and images form an artistic whole" (p. 192). Graphic novels, on the other hand, are described as "book-length comic books that are meant to

be read as one story" (Weiner in Tribunella & Hintz, 2019, p. 209). As we can see in these definitions, the terms have both differences and similarities, the main difference being that graphic novels are written as comic books. Hintz and Tribunella (2019) continue to write that "comics combine image and text, visual and verbal information, presented sequentially to tell a story" (p. 208). Based on this, I would argue that how the text is implemented in the story is a factor that can tell us about how a graphic text could be defined. When it comes to similarities between the two, Hintz & Tribunella (2019) writes that graphic novels and picturebooks both are popular forms of "imagetext", which build narratives visually (p. 207). In other words, visual narrative is central in both formats and allows the reader to make connections between the text and the images to create a full understanding of the story. Therefore, I argue that even though the Dr. Seuss stories often are classified as picturebooks, the theory and studies on picturebooks and graphic novels are similar in many ways. For example, they both are interesting in terms of multimodality, as they have text and images that work together to create meaning. I would even go as far as to challenge the perception of the Dr. Seuss books as picturebooks and argue that based on the moving placement of the text in relation to the images, amongst other things, puts the popular texts somewhere in-between the two definitions. Based on this, I use the term "graphic text" or "graphic literature" as my main term in the thesis.

3.2 Research design

The data collection method chosen for this thesis is the qualitative research method interview, as well as a textual analysis of three graphic texts written by Dr. Seuss. These three stories are chosen based on their unique structure and linguistic qualities, as well as the underlying themes and topics in the stories. The textual analysis aimed to investigate how the graphic literature can be used to educate students in grades 5-7 on the topic of diversity within socioeconomic minorities. The interviews were conducted as a supplement to the literature study, to investigate teacher-attitudes towards the topic. In this section, I aim to describe and discuss the methods used to explore the use of graphic literature in the 5th-10th EAL classroom.

3.2.1 Qualitative method

I chose to apply a qualitative method to my research. The qualitative research method is defined by John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell (2018) as "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem." They add that "the process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data" (p. 51). A qualitative research method is suitable for my thesis because it allows for more in-dept responses that enriches the research by shedding light on the current situation in EAL education. It is interesting to see how teacher attitudes are towards the topics of graphic literature in education, especially in relation to socioeconomic minorities, so one can reflect on the current situation in the EAL classroom. This also opens reflections about potentially addressing changes to the curriculum and education for in-service teachers and teacher education in general.

3.2.2 Credibility of findings

Due to a limited amount of participants, one cannot claim that the answers gathered in the data collection process are generalizable for the entire population of EAL language teachers in Norway. At the same time, the answers in relation to the literary analysis showed tendencies that can reveal a pattern and an overall trend. These trends can allow us to reflect on necessary changes to for example the curriculum or to teacher education. It is also important to mention that the findings from the qualitative interview process should be seen in relation to the findings in the textual analysis. The interviews are meant to be used as a supplement to the information we are left with after analyzing the graphic texts and together they can show potential strengths and weaknesses in EAL education and the use of graphic literature.

3.2.3 Data collection

I constructed a set of interview questions, which then was divided into two parts. The first part was a more general part where the participants were asked questions in relation to age, education and teaching experience. The second part was more closely related to my research topic and explored teacher attitudes and attentiveness to the research topic in an educational context. The questions covered how, or in what way, in-service teachers were aware of the implications of using graphic literature in EAL education and how often the topic of socioeconomic diversity appeared. For example, one question read: "Does the topic of economy and class occur as a part of your teaching?" (Appendix 2, question 8, p. 41).

At the start of every interview, there was a set interview protocol (Appendix 1, p. 40) that informed the participants about the project as well as practical information regarding their rights as interview objects. The participants were ensured anonymity and privacy and could choose to end the interview at any given time. They were also made aware that the interview was being recorded, and that the recording would be used as a part of this master's thesis. Also included were two definitions of the terms "graphic novel" and "socioeconomics". My definition of socioeconomics was taken from a Norwegian lexicon called Store Norske Leksikon, SNL, where the term is defined as a technical term that has to do with both social and economic conditions, linked to the interaction between the social and the economic (Tjernshaugen & Tjora, 2022). Graphic literature can be described in many ways, and I chose to describe it as literature that contains visual aspects such as pictures in conjunction with text. This is my own interpretation of the term, based on several different articles (Chute, 2017., Hints & Tribunella, 2019., McTaggart, 2008. & Rose, 2016). The inclusion of these definitions was done to ensure that every participant had the same basic understanding of the two main key terms in the thesis. This increased the validity of the answers, as a clarification helped avoid any misunderstandings throughout the data collection process. In addition, the interview objects were encouraged to ask questions to clear up any confusion both before the questions were being asked, and at the end of the data collection.

The interviews were held in Norwegian. This is because all the participants had Norwegian as their native language, and even though they all were proficient English speakers with university-degrees in English language teaching, Norwegian was their preferred language. It is of importance that the participants felt comfortable receiving and answering questions, and the use of the native language ensured that the questions were understood correctly. It also ensured that the answers they provided were correctly perceived by the interviewer. Another action taken to ensure that the participants felt

comfortable was sending the interview questions in advance, so the participants knew what questions to expect. One could argue that seeing the questions before the interview might ensure that the participants had reflected on the topic and provided well thought out answers that they felt comfortable representing. At the same time, one might argue that this could have taken away the spontaneous nature of the interviews. After conducting one failed interview early in the process where the participant generally answered "I don't remember" to a large part of the questions, it was concluded that sending the interviews in advance would have more pros than cons in this project.

The questions that were asked focused on highlighting how teachers treated the topic of socioeconomic minorities and graphic texts in their everyday teaching practices. Each question had follow-up questions, that were asked depending on the teachers' answer. This ensured that the participants could not simply answer "yes" or "no" but were encouraged to elaborate on their answers as to why they felt or acted a certain way.

3.2.4 Sikt research process

Before starting my data collection through holding interviews with willing participants, the data collection method had to be approved by Sikt, which is a research service provided by the knowledge sector in Norway. I applied to Sikt with general information about my research article, in addition to information about my data collection, how I planned to store the sensitive information gathered in the interviews, and what kinds of questions I was planning to ask. My application to Sikt was approved within 24 hours, which meant that I could start my interview process early. The Sikt process made me aware of elements I had not thought about, such as constructing an appropriate consent form for the participants that both informed them about the interview topics, anonymity and storing of the material. The approval-form also asked critical questions about my research, especially in relation to anonymity, which made me reflect on the interview process and data storage as well as the more general structure of the thesis.

3.3 Visual methodology

Visual methodology is central to my project, as it allows for an explanation of how the visual images may be interpreted and analyzed. Brown (2021) claims that education needs to prepare learners to navigate an environment which is characterized by a multiplicity of modalities, and what is described by the New London Group as an 'increasing local diversity and global connectedness' (New London Group, 1996, p. 64, in Brown, 2021, p.1). In other words, by supporting students and creating an appropriate learning environment, the students can learn a lot from visual texts. Research show that readers tend to read images at a superficial level, but that even younger learners can perform critical and complex analysis of visual texts given the appropriate scaffolding and the introduction of vocabulary (Brown. 2021, p.2). The teacher is an important factor here. They have the ability to choose the visual literature the students are engaging with, as well as provide the students with tools to help them gain a better understanding of what they are seeing or reading. In this section, I aim to mention a few important aspects within visual methodology that the teacher can focus on in order to use visual texts to its fullest. In this instance, the focus will be on multimodality, vision and visuality, critical thinking and language learning.

3.3.1 Multimodality

In the three graphic texts I chose, I have looked at the relationship between text and images. According to Matt Kessler (2022), The term multimodality refers to an individual's use of different modes (i.e., channels of communication) for the purpose of conveying meaning (p. 551). Fyfe and Law claim that a depiction never is just an illustration, as it is the site for the construction and depiction of social difference (Fyfe and Law, 1988 in Rose, 2016, p. 17). Images and text as separate components could both inhabit meaning and address important topics. Yet, some argue that when these components come together and are seen as one whole unit, new meaning and hidden or underlying themes could be found. Images and text are both individually important, but also collectively in the way they interact with each other. Dr. Seuss's stories are all accompanied by images. This makes them multimodal. Using a multimodal approach to research the relationship between text and images in the three Dr. Seuss stories has allowed for a reflection about what kinds of topics the stories draw attention to, and what interesting elements they bring into an educational context.

Multimodality is also interesting in relation to EAL learning. Kessler (2022) draws on different studies that all research the relationship between multimodality and learning English as an additional language. Research on the field is divided, but a study done by Vandommele et. al in 2017 found that "learners who participated in collaborative multimodal writing assignments outperformed a control group in terms of their texts' perceived communicative effectiveness, lexical diversity, text length, and other measures." (Vandommele et al., 2017, in Kessler, 2022, p. 552). This proves that multimodality is an important tool when it comes to learning and/or developing new and current languages. As we now have seen, the relationship between images and text plays an important role in meaning-making. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this is not isolated when it comes to how the text is interpreted. There is another factor that also plays a big role in this matter, which is the audience. This brings us to the topic of vision and visuality.

3.3.2 Vision vs. visuality

When looking at the graphic texts in relation to socioeconomics, I have not only been interested in the way the images are physically seen by the audience, but also how they are perceived by the eye in a more technical manner. In other words, my interest has been in looking at how the experiences and positionality of the audience plays a big role in how the images are interpreted. Sturken & Cartwright (2009, in Rose, 2016) write about visuality the way it affects the way the images are viewed. "What is important about images is not simply the image itself, but how it is seen by particular spectators who look in particular ways" (p. 18). As we can see here, it is crucial that we reflect on the meaning of images in a wider social and cultural perspective. Children come into the classroom with different experiences and backgrounds, and therefore they will all have different preconditions that affect the way the story is read, and the images are seen. This is not only relevant in the process of understanding how we interpret different images, but also for the students understanding of the world around them and how society works. Another important factor to add here is our participation in a society which is highly technological, and information therefore is very accessible. Some might even argue it has become *too* accessible, where it has become difficult to separate credible and false sources and information. We are always fed information that has the purpose of altering our opinions and actions, and an awareness towards this is crucial for our

understanding and participation in the modern world. This shows how visual methodology relates to the pedagogical practice of engaging the students in critical thinking, which I will be exploring further in the following paragraph.

3.3.3 Critical thinking

As established, making students aware of visual methodology can open for bigger discussions. This could be seen as a learning opportunity to teach students about their place as an individual in a wider, global setting. In this context, Tina Magazzini (2021) writes about the complexities of representation. She claims that "representation, in its political as well as in the artistic realm, is deeply embedded in a set of codes and social agreements which make it meaningful and understandable (...)" (p. 287). This describes how the representation we meet in the engagement with different topics are affected by several factors. In the case of this thesis, the main topic in question is socioeconomics, and the representation takes place in the three Dr. Seuss stories that the textual analysis will focus on. If we look back at Magazzini's claim, the representation of socioeconomics in the stories are represented in a certain way because of the way our society is built. This means both the society surrounding the author at the time of publishing and also the society surrounding the student at the time of exploring the book. This knowledge about how external factors shapes the way different things are represented and presented towards us does not only open for education on how the world works, it also opens for discussions on critical thinking. Knowing that most of the things we are exposed to are products of groups or individuals trying to propagate their opinions and ways of thinking gives us the ability to be critical and ask questions about what we are seeing or reading.

In a pedagogical perspective, using visual methodologies also allows the students to develop their self- reflection. Visual representation of characters that convey emotions and engage in different situations can provide students with a way or story reading that feels more intimate and relatable. Sacco (in Chute, 2017) supports this claim, and writes that the power of the image and its ability to impact us is central: "I think there is an inherent power in the immediacy of an image" (p. 35). As we can see here, graphic texts give the students the opportunity to put themselves in the shoes of the character, and reflect on their own actions, thoughts, and emotions. They might ask themselves "What would I do in this situation?" or "How would this make me feel?". One could also argue that self-reflection leads to the student gaining skills that also could be useful in collaboration or interactions with others. Engaging in self-reflection when reading graphic texts can enhance empathy which is crucial in the meeting with other students. Suzette Youngs (2012) writes that "Responses originating from visual images allowed for readers to interpret meaning and construct more sophisticated responses. Student interpretations were deeper when they analyzed the visual images." (p. 383). This shows how graphic texts can be tools that develop social skills such as empathy, that are useful in societal participation. An important part of the teacher's role as an educator is preparing students to face the complex world we live in.

3.3.4 Language learning

As an English teacher, the goal of achieving language learning will always be present in the EAL classroom. There are many disagreements on how the teacher can facilitate this in the best way possible, but no matter how you prefer to get there, language learning is still one of the main goals. Maagerø & Tønnessen (2022) writes

about the importance of English language learning. "As English is the most taught language all over the world, learning EAL should help make global communication possible and foster intercultural awareness. In a complex world with many conflicts and challenges, high standard communication in English is more important than ever" (p. 28). As we can see here, learning English is crucial for participation in the global world.

Cecilie Waallann Brown (2021) writes about EFL learners engaging in critical visual literacy practices. She observes that research show that readers tend to read images at a superficial level, but that studies show that even younger learners can perform critical and complex analysis of visual texts given the appropriate scaffolding and the introduction of vocabulary (p. 2). This points to the possibility of language learning and highlights the importance of teacher facilitation. It is crucial that the teacher provides scaffolding that is appropriate considering the students level of proficiency, while also taking into consideration other possible languages the student speaks and their cultural background. Introducing compelling and engaging texts that are linguistically unique is not enough in itself if the teacher does not provide enough support. Yet, if used correctly, graphic texts hold a lot of possibilities when it comes to language learning.

In the context of critical visual literacy, graphic texts can be used as a resource in the EAL classroom. Jacquelyn McTaggart (2008) does research on visual literature and language learning. She writes that teachers use visual literature because "they *enable* the struggling reader, *motivate* the reluctant one, and *challenge* the high-level learner" (p.32). This shows how graphic texts can be used as a tool for a variety of different student groups, and that it is universal in the way that most students will benefit in some way from exploring visual literature. Schwartz (2006) supports this by claiming that educators have urged the use of comics as an alternative, appealing way for students to analyze literary conventions, character development, dialogue, satire, and language structures as well as develop writing and research skills (p. 58). As we now have seen, many argue that graphic texts and language learning are closely related, and that graphic texts therefore should be employed in EAL education to develop student's skills.

4 Analysis of Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

For the analysis, the three primary texts in focus, all written by Dr. Seuss, are *The Sneetches* (1961), *Horton Hears a Who* (1954) and *The Lorax* (1971). These three stories are all interesting contributions by Dr. Seuss that have survived and are just as, if not more, relevant today as they were when they were written decades ago. In this section, I investigate the value and meaning of the books, looking at them from the perspective of an educator. I am interested in how they portray the topic of economy and capitalism in terms of engagement in critical thinking, as well as their visual aspects and how language and rhyme functions in the narratives.

4.2 The Sneetches

The Sneetches (Seuss, 1961) is a short story about a village where a society of creatures named "The Sneetches" live. These creatures have human-like behavior and discriminate against those who do not have stars on their bellies: "But, because they had stars, all the Star Belly Sneetches Would brag, We're the best kind of Sneetch on the beaches." (p. 2). Because of this, the village is split up into two classes: the upper-class sneetches with stars on their bellies and the lower-class Sneetches without stars. Then, a salesman named Sylvester McMonkey McBean comes along and offers to "fix" the starless Sneetches by giving them stars through his machine. This causes the star-bellied Sneetches to remove their stars to keep their status and stick out from the crowd, which causes a social discord where nobody knows who belongs to what class: "They kept paying money. They kept running through. Until neither the Plain nor the Star-Bellies knew, Whether this one was that one... or that one was this one, or which one was what one...or what one was who." (p. 20). When all the money has been spent on adding and removing stars, the salesman leaves and the Sneetches agree that they are all the same, with or without stars on their bellies. "The day they decided that Sneetches are Sneetches, And no kind of Sneetch is the best on the beaches" (p. 23).

The Sneetches is interesting because the creatures in the story appear silly, but what they actually do is mimic ordinary human behavior in an exaggerated way. The rhyme and poetic language are also components that adds to this feature, making the story seem absurd and foolish and therefore also easier to understand and dissect for the audience. It gives the audience the position to roll their eyes at the silly world they are invited into, while also easily understanding the underlying themes and topics because of

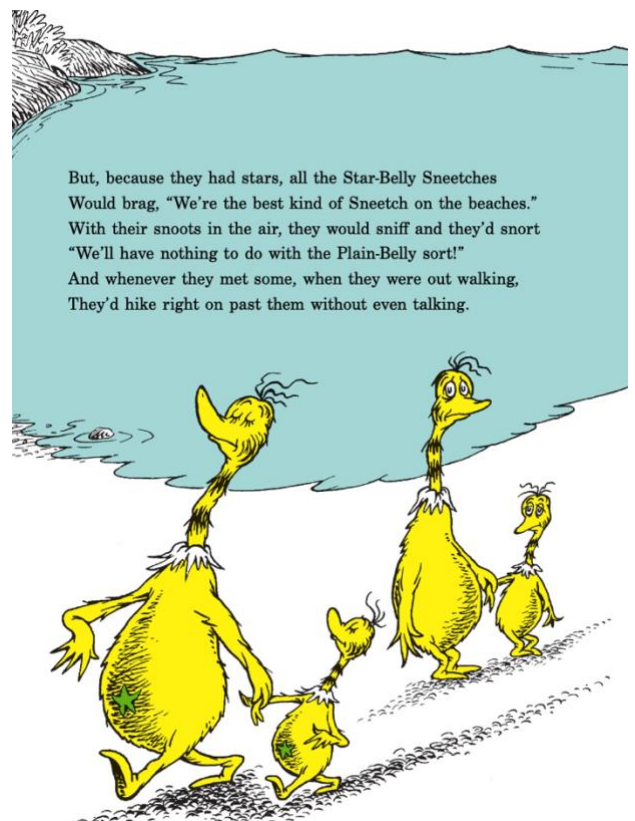
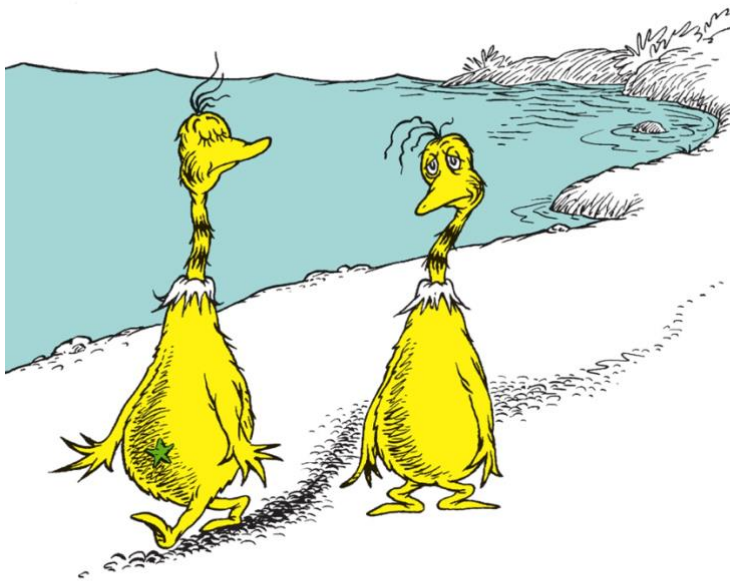


Figure 1: Image from *The Sneetches* (Seuss, 1961, p. 3).

the narrative portrayal of the creatures. The creatures are represented as greedy and discriminating, giving the reader hints as to what goes wrong in their society. One interesting choice made by the author is the fact that the only thing that separates the Sneetches from each other are small stars on their bellies: "Now, the Star-Belly Sneetches Had bellies with stars. The Plain-Belly Sneetches Had none upon thars." (p. 1). This is also something that is commented by the narrator in the story: "Those stars weren't so big. They were really so small. You might think such a thing wouldn't matter at all" (p. 1). This shows us that the element or feature that decides the worth of the Sneetches really is irrelevant and unfair in the sense that the stars have no actual worth other than the one agreed upon by the society. The simplicity of what the Sneetches are fighting about – the stars on their bellies – seems unnecessary and ridiculous. This reflects our own society, where many people see the worth of themselves and others based on trivial and insignificant things such as how they look or what they own.



Now, the Star-Belly Sneetches
Had bellies with stars.
The Plain-Belly Sneetches
Had none upon thars.

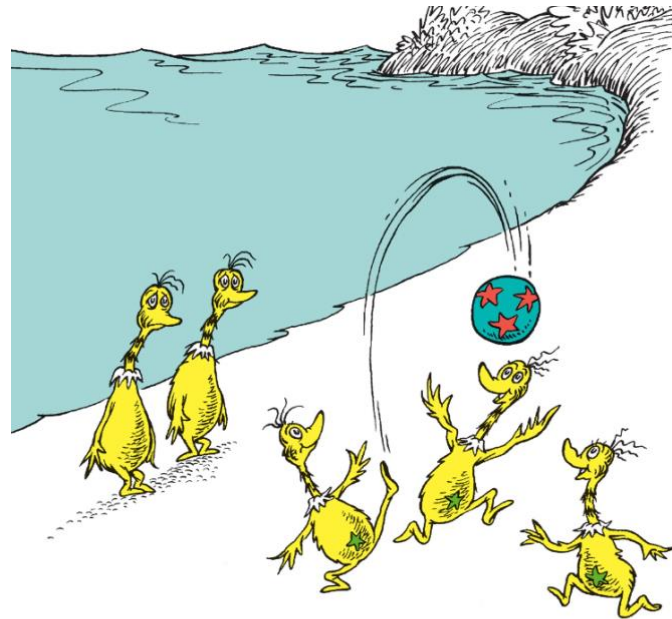
Those stars weren't so big. They were really so small
You might think such a thing wouldn't matter at all.

Figure 2: Image from *The Sneetches* (Seuss, 1961, p. 2).

The stars could be seen in relation to commodity fetishism, which is a term used by Karl Marx to explain how the worth of merchandise is not determined by the quality, but rather the status it symbolizes. The term is used by Marx in *Capital* vol. 1, "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret thereof" (1867). The value of the stars is not in the actual worth of the product but what they signify or stand for in that particular society. The focus is not on the product because of its quality but because the product signals something. In this case, the stars signify status and high social class. One might say that the stars are presented as an allegory, because its visual form represents a way

of thinking about capitalism as signs or symbols connected to the interpretations of our society. This commodity fetishism found in *The Sneetches* seems inspired from the real world, where this concept largely exists in our everyday lives. We wear clothes with brand logos and use products from famous influencers, and while the quality of these products often is not unique and can be found cheaper without the brand name, we continue to pay money on the more expensive and well-known products. We are in fact not much different from the Sneetches, and realizing this can open our eyes up as to how we are creating differences among those in our society based on simple things that do not matter in the bigger picture.

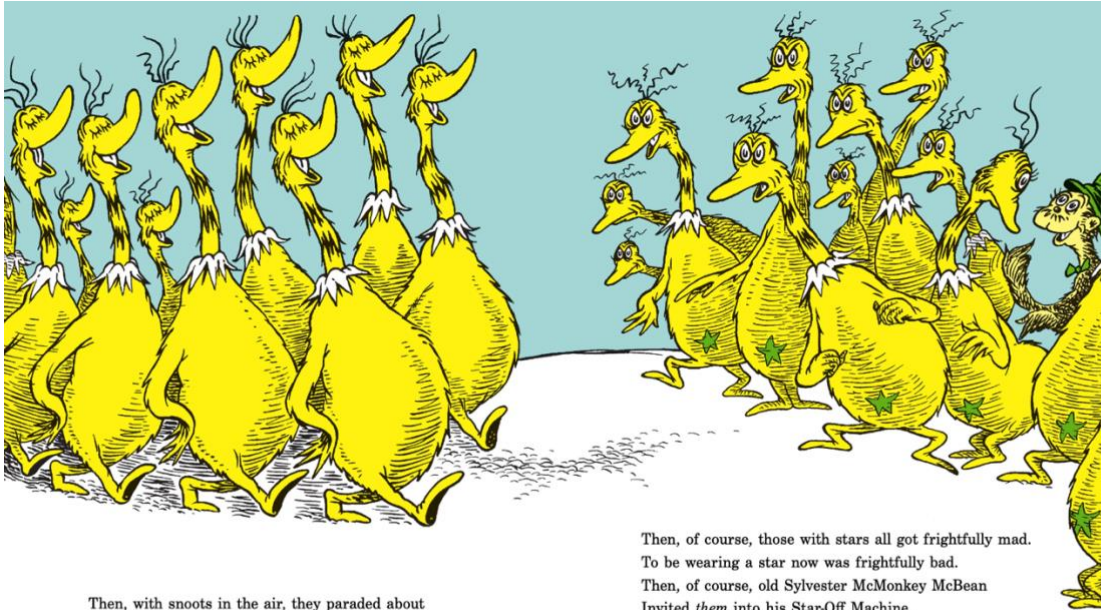
Another interesting aspect of how the Sneetches are portrayed are the colors, which we can see in figure 3. The Sneetches are all yellow, which is a color with many associations. One of these associations are happiness and joy. This might be a reflection on the nature of the Sneetches and their society. But it is also important to note that the stars on their bellies are green. Green is often associated with luck, but also with envy. One could argue that these colors show a happy society of Sneetches who live in harmony, but in a way are infected by these green stars. Green is also traditionally the color of money, and green can also be found in the outfit of the merchant who makes money off the Sneetches' insecurities. The "infection" of the stars is interesting and is also represented visually through a separation of the Sneetches with and without stars through the whole story, all up until the end where both become friends and shake hands. This reconciliation on the last page where they physically engage with each other points towards the "infection" being cured. This is because physical contact finally is allowed, which also is the case when a real bodily infection or disease has healed.



When the Star-Belly children went out to play ball,
Could a Plain-Belly get in the game . . . ? Not at all.
You only could play if your bellies had stars
And the Plain-Belly children had none upon thars.

Figure 3: Image from *The Sneetches* (Seuss, 1961, p. 4)

On the other hand, one could also argue that the stars also represent a "cure". We can see that the Sneetches with stars on their bellies walk around with a good posture, and that they also are engaging in physical activity such as playing with a ball or walking around. Meanwhile the Sneetches without stars look sad, with poor postures and bags under their eyes, signaling that they are not well. They also are not participating in any activities and are only standing around watching the star-bellied Sneetches. What is interesting is that in the end, the roles are reversed when everyone gets access to the stars, and the original star-bellied Sneetches remove theirs. Then, suddenly the meaning of the stars changes to be associated with the lower class. This once again makes the stars seem like an infection, but instead of infecting the Sneetches with ignorance and arrogance, it infects them with being valued as less socially esteemed than the others. This reflects the real-life market in which the consumers collectively choose the value of a brand or an item, which not only has an impact on the owner of the product, but also on the self-worth and self-esteem of the consumers who use the product.



Then, with snoots in the air, they paraded about
 And they opened their beaks and they let out a shout,
 "We know who is who! Now there isn't a doubt.
 The best kind of Sneetches are Sneetches without!"

Then, of course, those with stars all got frightfully mad.
 To be wearing a star now was frightfully bad.
 Then, of course, old Sylvester McMonkey McBean
 Invited *them* into his Star-Off Machine.

Then, of course from THEN on, as you probably guess,
 Things really got into a horrible mess.

Figure 4: Image from *The Sneetches* (Seuss, 1961, p. 17 & 18)

The fact that the stars can be interpreted as both an infection and as a cure produces a remarkable irony in the book. Upselling and creating a market for products we do not actually need is a key part of capitalism, but purchasing these products also has positive implications for the customer. Wearing products that have positive connotations in our society make us feel good, and it is normal human behavior to crave this feeling of being perceived by others in a positive manner. The brand names and influencer products we pay for give us the ability to fulfill this feeling. This means that even though capitalism and consumerism is creating a gap in our society between the poor and the rich, it feeds a human desire for social approval, allowing individuals to gain positive exposure, at least those who can afford it. Therefore, the stars can be seen as an infection that splits the society, but also a cure that elevates the lives of those who can afford them. A blessing and a curse, depending on where you look, capitalism both generates and fulfills its own desires.

The merchant Sylvester McMonkey McBean is in a way the embodiment of capitalism, and his actions act as a warning or a heads up to the reader. The story itself has very strong critique of capitalism. Having a character represent an entire system is clever, especially when bringing literature into the classroom. For children, it might be easier to grasp the concept of injustice or unfairness when someone is to blame, instead of looking at an entire system. Sylvester McMonkey McBean come into the village and acts as an influencer, commercializing his machine. The way he tries to tempt the Sneetches is very similar to how commercials and influencers act in the real world. The merchant says "I'll make you again the best Sneeches on beaches, and all it will cost you is ten dollar eaches" (p. 15). This is something one could have read in an actual commercial, the difference being that it is made easy for the reader to learn the true intentions of Sylvester McMonkey McBean, while it is more hidden in the real world. In the contemporary world, influencers are using images that display signs of wealth and happiness to generate clicks, which is converted into income. This reflects an attention economy where the attention of the audience is a resource. This is similar to what Sylvester McMonkey McBean is doing. He shows up in a big vehicle with loud colors, speaking to the Sneetches with confidence. By gaining their attention, he generates a customer base that are willing to pay for the product he is showcasing.

As we now have seen, *The Sneetches* (Seuss, 1961) brings up the topic of capitalism as well as class and prejudice. Moving on, I want to look at the story *Horton Hears a who* (Seuss, 1954), which also tackles questions about the significance of empathy and standing up for what is right.

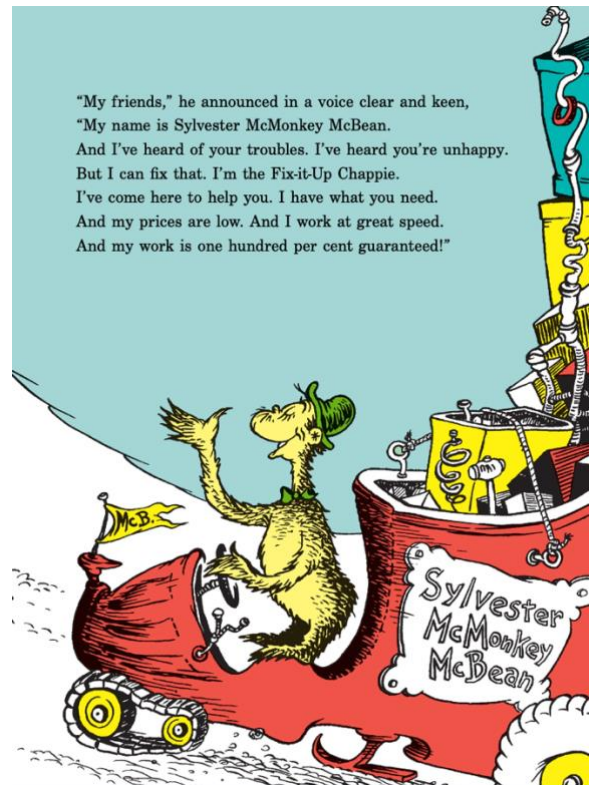


Figure 5: Image from *The Sneetches* (Seuss, 1961, p. 8)

4.3 Horton hears a who

Horton Hears a Who (Seuss, 1954) is a short story about an elephant named Horton who finds a speck of dust with "The Whos", who are tiny people living on the speck of dust: "I've never heard tell of a small speck of dust that is able to yell. So you know what I think?... Why, I think that there must be someone on top of that small speck of dust!" (p. 5). Nobody is interested in protecting the Whos because they cannot hear them, so Horton the elephant makes it his mission to protect them and make the others listen. He puts the speck of dust on a clover. Others try to sabotage his mission and steal the clover, but Horton never gives up his mission to protect them. In the end, a small Who called JoJo adds his voice and the animals realize that the who's are real people who need to be protected.

Although the voice of different people in our society often are distinguished by their size, majority or minority, this is shown in a literal sense in *Horton Hears a Who*, where we can hear the voice of the big elephant better than the voice of the small Whos. This is visualized throughout the novel in different ways. Throughout the story, sounds are being visually presented. Firstly, the reader is invited into a world of both image and sound through the visualization of actions that generate sound. An example on this is the Kangaroos jumping into the water, creating a big splash which can be seen in figure 7. This creates another dimension to the story being read, which makes the story come alive for the audience. This might be positive for engagement. Also, if we stick to the theme that making sound is a metaphor for taking place or making yourself heard in the larger society, the kangaroos making a big splash towards Horton the elephant might be interpreted as them disregarding Hortons's voice and trying to keep him quiet.

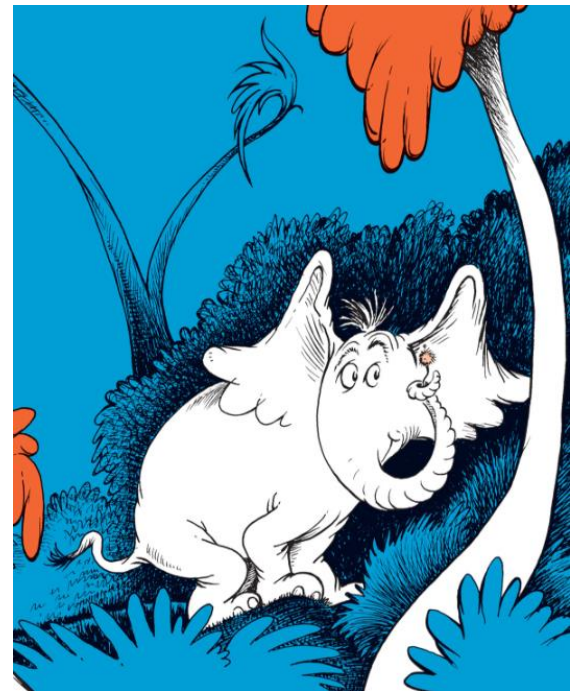


Figure 6: Image from *Horton Hears a Who* (Seuss, 1954, p. 19).

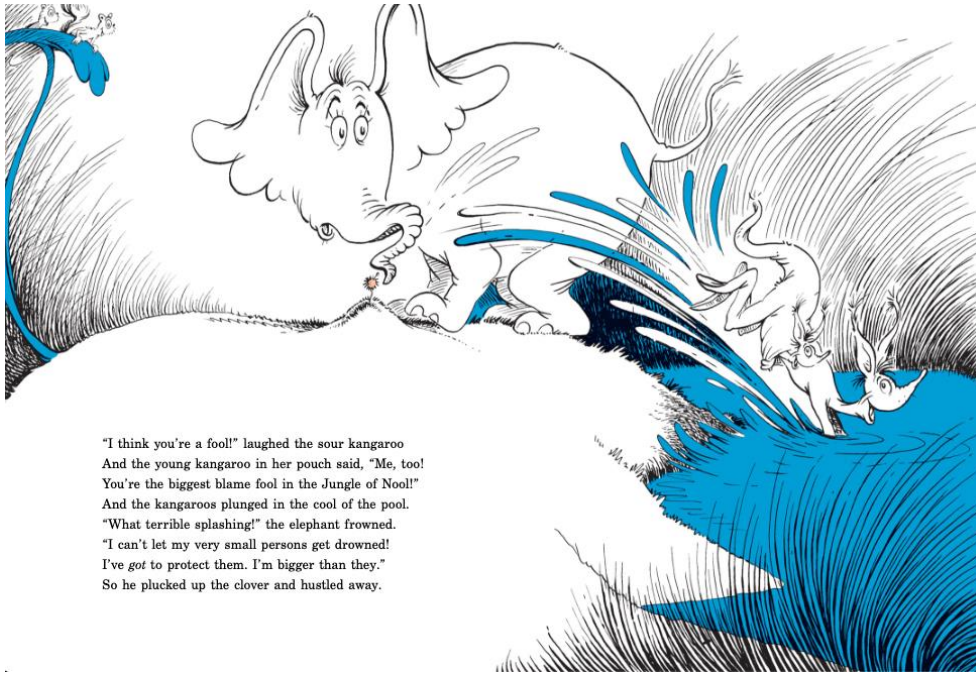


Figure 7: Image from *Horton Hears a Who* (Seuss, 1954, p. 14 & 15)

Further, the visualization of sound is made clear through the variances in textual size. When Horton is conversing with the Whos, the difference in the sound made is made clear through the size of the text. Horton's part of the conversation is written with a normal textual size, while the Who's part of the conversation is presented with very small text. This has opportunities for language learning. The way the text gives visual scaffolding as to how loud or quiet the sound is, gives context to the reader and helps the language learners associate text with sound. It also helps underline the meaning of the story, as the text keeps up with the theme of big versus small. This visualization can also be employed as a support when for example reading out loud, as the sizing gives direction as to how to read the story, much like a musical score.

Using characters with different sizes helps display how some people in our society are heard and can voice their opinions because they are louder, but that this does not mean that the quieter voices are less important or should not be accounted for in the bigger picture. As Horton says, "I'll just have to save him. Because, after all, A person's a person, no matter how small" (p. 12) The novel reminds readers that it is easy to forget or ignore those who are unable to speak up. Size and comparison are reoccurring through the whole story. In the beginning, Horton finds the Whos on a speck of dust: "Why, I think

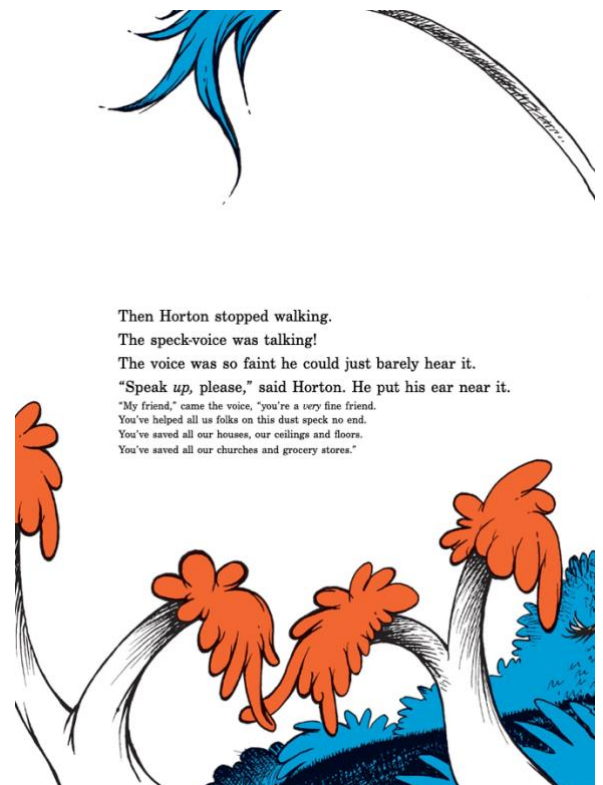


Figure 8: Image from *Horton Hears a Who* (Seuss, 1954, p. 18)

there must be someone on top of that small speck of dust! Some sort of creature of very small size, too small to be seen by an elephant's eyes..." (p. 5). Finding a voice on the most unlikely and most tiny place may symbolize the importance of every individual and also the importance of looking for those who are being marginalized to bring forward their voices. In our capitalist society, those who have money also have power, and it is no secret that wealth and class are factors that impact societal structures that drive important processes like politics, and therefore also democracy. Through creating a hidden society of neglected voices, Dr. Seuss encourages the audience to reflect on their own position in the world. One might relate to the Whos who are not being heard, or maybe even the characters that are ignorant and do not believe Horton. No matter where you feel you belong, Horton provides an example of a role model that breaks barriers between the social classes and creates a voice for those who cannot be heard.

Horton, who represents the ones that can be heard loud and clear, is portrayed as an elephant. Elephants are known for being gentle giants, as well as for their hearing abilities. According to the organization SeaWorld, "Elephants have good hearing, detecting sounds as low as 14 to 16 hz (human low range: 20 hz) and as high as 12,000 hz (human high range: 20,000)" (SeaWorld, n.d.). In other words, elephants have the ability to hear very low-frequency sounds. Elephants symbolize many things, some of those being intelligence, wisdom, leadership, and strength. These are associations that helps form an empathic and caring character. As Horton is the one who sticks up for the little Whos, he works as a role model in the story by portraying wanted behavior. In a way, Horton is the embodiment of inclusivity and equality.

It is noteworthy that Horton, like the rest of Dr. Seuss's characters, are non-human, yet portray human-like qualities and behaviors. This provides the audience with a distance to the characters, which can have several consequences for the readers experience. Firstly, the characters being non-human is important because this means that they do not resemble any humans in particular, which makes them more universally relatable. This makes the story reach a bigger audience. Further, the fact that they are not human creates a distance to the story. The issues being shed light on are more easily addressed and reflected upon by the audience when we do not feel attacked or caricatured. The characters add humor and a comedic distance, allowing us to read the story on a deeper level.

The fact that Horton is an elephant that portray inclusivity and equality serves as a reminder to the reader to see the value in their own voice and to recognize and value the voice of others, no matter how small. This might make the reader reflect on their own voice and privilege, and also make them look around to see if there are anyone around them that is not being heard, both on an individual level and a larger social level. In order to hear those who are not being heard, it is important to recognize who they are and reflect on their place in our society as well as our own. The story of Horton and the Whos are not made exclusively as a recognition for those who are not being heard, but also for those who are in a position with more power to recognize their resources and privilege. The story does encourage the minority voices to take action: "And you very small persons will not have to die if you make yourselves heard!" (p. 47), but for change to be made in a society, it is pivotal for those who inhabit power to employ this for the good. Also, to be able to make a change you must be aware that you have the ability to do so. This is displayed by Horton, who states "Please don't harm all my little folks, who have as much right to live as us bigger folks do!" (p. 27). Therefore, the story of Horton and the Whos might act as an encouragement to take a step back and reflect on our own

place in the society and what power or influence we have. This is especially important in a society where some of us have a lot of resources, while others have close to none.

As Horton fights for justice and helps the Whos, he is a role model for how one should act towards others that struggle with not being heard. In the next story, *The Lorax*, we also meet a society that is in need of somebody to use their voice in defense of the defenseless.

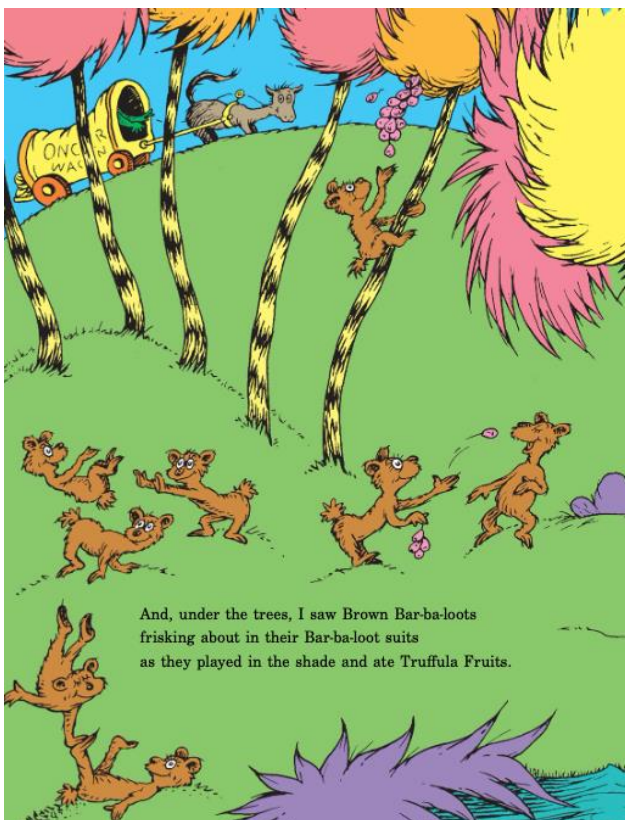
4.4 The Lorax

The Lorax (Seuss, 1971) is a story about protecting the environment. We meet the Once-ler, who uses the nature around him for personal profit and financial gain: "And, in no time at all, in the factory I built, the whole Once-ler Family was working full tilt. We were all knitting Thneeds just as busy as bees, to the sound of the chopping of Truffula Trees." (p. 30) This has negative implications for not only the nature but also for the Bar-ba-loots who live there and are running out of food. The Lorax tries to explain for the Once-ler how his actions impact those around him, but he keeps growing his factory and fills the environment with so much smoke, the Swomee-swans cannot sing anymore. "Once-ler! You're making such smogulous smoke! My poor Swomee-Swans . . . why, they can't sing a note! No one can sing who has smog in his throat." (p. 40). Finally, there are no more trees left and every other creature except the Once-ler has no choice but to leave. He is left all alone and realizes that the world is doomed- unless someone cares for it. The figure below shows the home of the Once-ler after the destruction of the Truffula forest.



Figure 9: Image from *The Lorax* (Seuss, 1971, p. 5).

The Lorax raises important questions about the environment and the impact of humans, and one cannot speak about nature and environmental issues without also bringing capitalism into the conversation. *The Lorax* shows how the drive to grow financially and to climb the economic ladder has repercussions for both the nature and people surrounding us. The greedy goal to have more money can become overpowering, taking over and overshadowing other important aspects of life. The Once-ler becomes lonely and pushes the community away from him, but at least he is rich, and still working on becoming richer by selling his story. *The Lorax* acts as a cautionary tale, which becomes apparent already at the start of the book. Here, we can see a boy visiting the street of the lifted Lorax after the nature has been ruined. Colors are frequently used in *The Lorax* to underline the message that is being conveyed, and in the beginning the colors are dark and gloomy, the trees are withered and the only one living there is the Once-ler. We can also see that the colors used are purple, black, and dark blue, which are colors typically not associated with nature and a healthy environment. Then, the story jumps back in time to before the environmental disaster. Here, the colors are vivid and bright, and we find natural colors such as light blue, green, yellow and red. In figure 10 and 11, the comparison is shown of the Truffula forest before and after the Once-ler has destroyed it.



And, under the trees, I saw Brown Bar-ba-loots
frisking about in their Bar-ba-loot suits
as they played in the shade and ate Truffula Fruits.

Figure 10: Image from *The Lorax* (Seuss, 1971, p. 14).

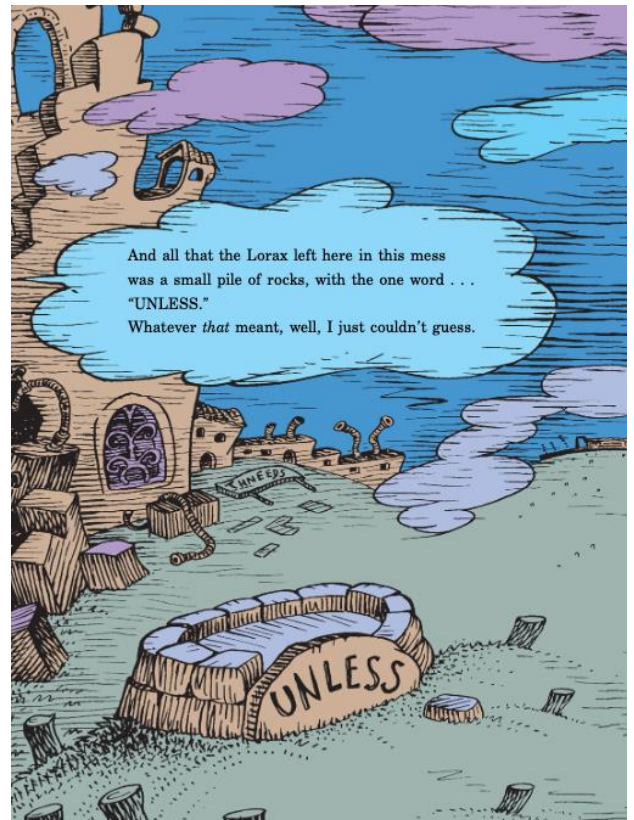


Figure 11: Image from *The Lorax* (Seuss, 1971, p. 56)

As mentioned, environment and capitalism are closely related. Money is mentioned as a driving factor and motivation for the Once-ler's actions. The Once-ler discovers he can exploit the nature for financial gain by chopping down trees to make "Thneeds", which are knitted universal covers, shown in figure 12. When the Once-ler introduces the garment to the Lorax, he describes the garment as "(...) a Fine-Something-That-All-People-Need! It's a shirt. It's a sock. It's a glove. It's a hat. But it has other uses. Yes, far beyond that. You can use it for carpets. For pillows! For sheets! Or curtains! Or covers for bicycle seats!" (p. 24). The way the thneeds are portrayed makes them thought-provoking.

One can say that the item itself is useless, but the way the thneeds are described by the Once-ler transforms them from useless knitted garments into something everyone needs and must have. Essentially, the Once-ler creates a product that has little purpose but reaches a big audience of consumers, making it popular and widespread. As thneeds in reality are non-essential products, it is interesting to see what they symbolize. Showing us how one can trick people to buy something useless by convincing them that it is something they must have is something that happens a lot in the real world as well. Instead of buying what we need, we are made aware of all the things we do not have, which makes our lives consumed with objects. One might argue that this stems from an unconscious drive to collect, but what gives us this drive? As a product becomes increasingly more popular, what the item symbolizes changes as it gains a certain status. As more people purchase the item, others are driven to do the same because the item becomes a symbol for belonging in, and keeping up with, the larger group. This is very similar to what the stars represent in *The Sneetches* (1961). Both the thneeds and the stars symbolize a social status that is available to be purchased along with the product.

While the Once-ler is harming the nature, the Lorax acts as the voice of reason. These two characters are the protagonist and antagonist in the story, and the way they are portrayed in very different ways is interesting. Firstly, we never see the Once-ler in full, only his eyes peeking through the blinds or his hands. The Lorax, on the other hand, is very visible. This is shown in figure 13. The fact that we cannot see the Once-ler can impact the way the story is read. Firstly, this makes the character mysterious and odd, which enhances the reader's experience. It is intriguing to find out more about this character, which leads the reader to keep exploring the story. Further, it might lead to a bigger focus on his actions instead of who the character really is.

The fact that the Once-ler stays anonymous reflects our own society. Individuals that try to combat the climate-crisis, such as the Lorax, are often very visible and aim to get their voices heard. It is no secret that big companies that make a lot of money also contribute negatively to our climate and nature. To be able to make profit one must sell a product, which has to be made in a factory that produces greenhouse gasses and therefore contributes to global warming. These companies are run, and owned, by humans who make profit. Yet, it is easier to put the blame on individuals rather than

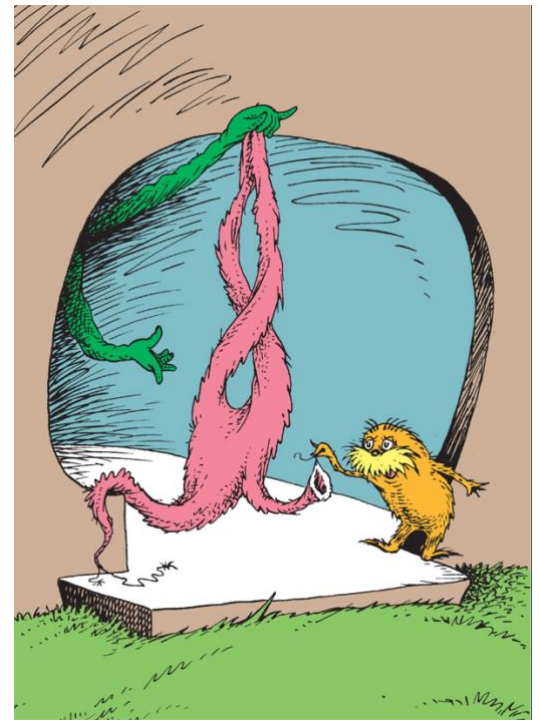


Figure 12: Image from *The Lorax* (Seuss, 1971, p. 25)

companies. It is easy and non-confrontational for corporate leaders to hide behind their companies, just like the Once-ler who hides inside of his factory, keeping his anonymity. This allows for the profit to be accountability-free for those who are making money off the product, without being its face externally.



Figure 13: Image from *The Lorax* (Seuss, 1971, p. ii & iii).

The use of colors to distinguish the meanings of these characters is central to *The Lorax*. The visible parts of the Once-ler are a murky dark green, which can symbolize several things. Firstly, the shade of green might be used to show his greed or his harm to nature. The murky color could represent a toxic poison, slowly infiltrating and poisoning the Truffula forest. At the same time, green is also a color connected to nature. This might be a conscious act of irony, but it might also be symbolic in other ways. Some might say we are all connected to nature, even the Once-ler. We cannot survive without nature, and without it there also would be no resources for companies to build their brands. Therefore, the Once-ler's green color could be interpreted as a nod to his connection to nature, showing that nature is important for his journey and growth. This highlights a complexity that is apparent both in *The Lorax* and in the real world, where we destroy something that is necessary for both our survival and our economic growth. In other words, we are ruining something we are completely dependent on. This raises the question if it is possible to be both a destroyer and lover of nature at the same time. The Lorax is orange, with is a strong contrast to the green Once-ler, highlighting the differences between the two. Orange is a color often associated with energy, passion, and enthusiasm, which aligns with the Lorax's eager to save the environment and the Truffula forest. The Lorax also is less anonymous in comparison to the Once-ler. We can fully see him when he appears, and the opinions he voices is loud and clear without hidden meaning. He is a very transparent and easily trusted character, and just like Horton in *Horton Hears a Who* (1954), he is the voice of reason, speaking for the nature and the animals that cannot speak for themselves.

As we have seen above, money and capitalism are reoccurring terms in the novel and the story even starts with the exchange of money. In the very beginning, a human boy travels to the home of the Once-ler, who only will share the story of the Lorax in exchange of payment: "He'll tell you, perhaps . . . if you're willing to pay." (p. 4).

Bringing economy into the story as a topic is a clever way to start the book. Firstly, it sheds light on the way capitalism works. The Once-ler takes a story, that initially is free, and capitalizes off the story to make profit. As silly as it seems, it is also a reality. To access literature, such as Dr. Seuss's, one has to pay. The Once-ler asks for "fifteen cents and a nail and the shell of a great-great-great-grandfather snail" (p. 6). The way the Once-ler sells his story for scraps makes it seem silly, but it is in fact very close to reality. It is also ironic that we have to contribute to capitalism by purchasing the stories, in order to read about, and be educated, on how capitalism works and why it can be critiqued. Secondly, the story beginning with the transaction for hearing the story also shows the true nature of the Once-ler. His greediness is revealed straight away, which allows the audience to read the rest of the story knowing his true intentions and his faith. It also shows how the Once-ler is never satisfied and will not stop until he has milked the consumers around him for all of their assets, also reflecting our own society where the consumer is constantly targeted.

In the very end of the story, the boy who pays to talk to the Once-ler is given a Truffula-tree seed in order to save re-nurture the forest: "You're in charge of the last of the Truffula Seeds. And Truffula Trees are what everyone needs". (p. 61). This generates hope for the audience, and encourages us to take action and generate change. This is a clever way of storytelling, where we are faced with the outcome or destiny of a choice, and then shown at the end how to correct the mistakes and redo the story the correct way. It is impactful that the Once-ler, who has fought and taken everything he has ever dreamt of, can reflect upon his own actions and tell the audience cost of his actions: "Grow a forest. Protect it from axes that hack. Then the Lorax and all of his friends may come back." (p. 61).

5 Discussion of Research Findings

5.1 Interview findings

I have conducted four interviews of in-service teachers throughout my research process, and even though the interviews themselves are not representative of the entire population of in-service teachers in Norway, they point towards trends that are worth commenting on. In this section, all direct citations of participant answers are translated directly from Norwegian to English. In the interviews, the teachers were asked about how economy and diversity appears as a part of their teaching, and if they ever have used the work of Dr. Seuss in their classroom education: "Have you ever used literature from the author Dr. Seuss or other texts that deal with socioeconomic issues related to economic status and class?" (Appendix 2, question 7, p. 41) and "Does the topic of economy and class occur as a part of your teaching?" (Appendix 2, question 8, p. 41).

When it comes to question number 8, some of the teachers answered that they did not explicitly teach about economy in relation to diversity but rather on diversity without touching the subject of economy, poverty, or capitalism: for example, "Not that I recall, not consciously. It is not a topic, like today we are having this specific topic, but I'm sure it appears in some of the texts" (Appendix 3 D, p. 50). Others claimed that economy and diversity appeared as a sub-genre when for example watching the news with the class, without it being the main topic of the lesson or classroom activities: "It appears sometimes, maybe if we watch *supernytt* or... and they see that something is unfair in relation to war for example, which they unfortunately see in *supernytt*. Or yes, both good and not good maybe." (Appendix 3 A, p. 44). For clarification, "*supernytt*" is a Norwegian news program made for children. Something worth mentioning is that even though teachers were not negative to exploring the topic of economy, they had not reflected much on this before I asked them my questions. This is an important finding because it shows that it not necessarily is something teachers are opposed to implementing in their education, but rather something they have little knowledge about and have not reflected on the importance of. Figure 14 included below shows a condensed graph of the findings. For more clarifications about answers, see interview transcriptions (Appendix 3, p. 42-50), or the overview of interview findings (Appendix 4, p. 51-52).

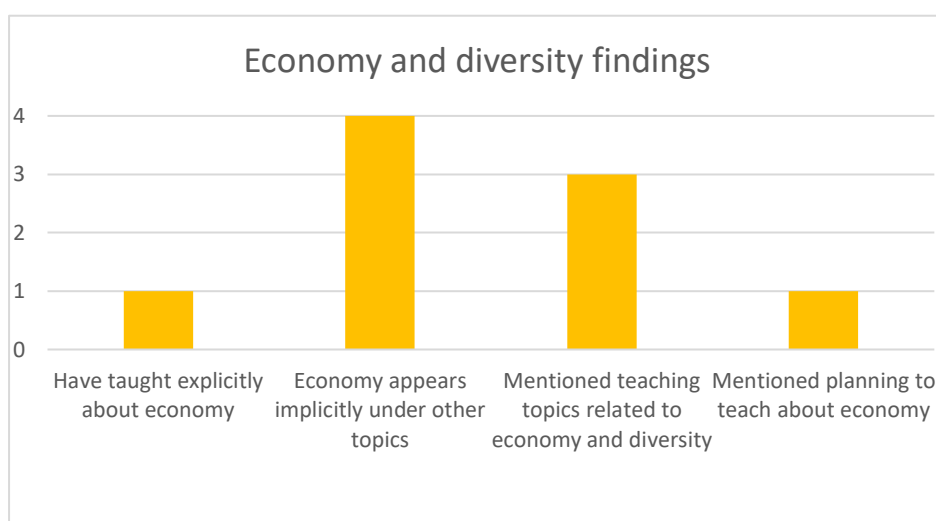


Figure 14: Economy and diversity findings from interviews

When asked about graphic literature and Dr. Seuss in particular, most of the teachers were positive toward the use of multimodal texts. One participant stated that the visual aspect helped the students remember more, while another praised visual texts as a learning scaffold for weak learners:

It is nice to have pictures with books on the blackboard when we are telling a story and things like that. Then they have some more... When they connect it to the image I have experiences that they maybe remember more" (Appendix 3 A, p. 42-43). "(...) Maybe especially for those who struggle. They became more safe or could get some help to digest the text or process the text through the images. It made more sense for them. (Appendix 3 B, p. 45).

When it comes to Dr. Seuss, only one participant has used his work in the classroom. They felt that the students enjoyed working with his stories. The others had not worked with Dr. Seuss in the classroom at all, and several of them were unfamiliar with his work.

In the first two interviews, I chose to use the term "graphic novel" to the participants. In the remainder of the interviews, I changed to use the term "graphic literature". The reason behind this is that as my research progressed, I felt that the first term was not corresponding with the way the Dr. Seuss's stories were written. As mentioned earlier, my understanding is that the three stories I have chosen fall somewhere in between the term of picture book and graphic novel, and when I realized this, graphic literature seemed like the most appropriate term. I do want to add that before every interview, I did give the participants a clarification of the terms, which stayed the same through the shift of terminology: "Graphic literature is literature that contains visual aspects such as pictures in conjunction with text. In my thesis, I am concerned with the interaction between text and images, and how the visual aspect of literature has an impact on how we perceive and understand what we read." (Appendix 1). Therefore, even though the terminology varies throughout the interview process, the participants are all given the same clarification of what I am interested to find. I do still want to admit that the terminology does matter. The changing of terminology does affect the data and knowing this now gives me the insight that I could have been clearer at the outset.

As the interviews revealed, many of the teachers had positive attitudes towards multimodality and visual text as a tool for language learning. Yet, the research also revealed that the vast majority of them did not explicitly teach about economy and diversity, as it mostly appeared as a part of other conversations and classroom topics. This is shown in the graph in figure 15, which shows the participants answers to the questions about graphic literature. Even though I have condensed my findings into numbers, they need to be explained in order to understand the bigger picture.

All 4 out of 4 participants had not explicitly taught about economy and diversity in their education, though 1 out of 4 stated that they had planned on doing so in the near future. I believe that this highlights a

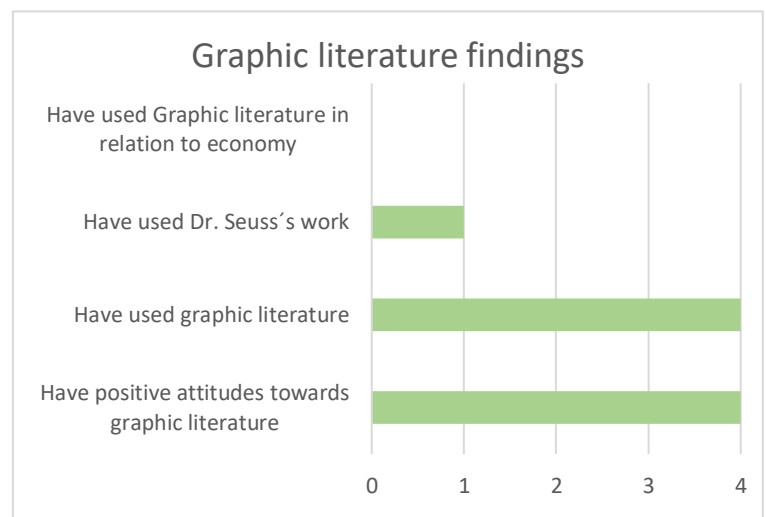


Figure 15: Graph of literature findings from interviews

missed opportunity for learning in the Norwegian English-learning classroom. Through the presentation of theory and analysis of material in this thesis, I believe to have shown how learning about economy, capitalism and social structures surrounding these topics have great educational value and are necessary to provide the students with the tools to navigate the world. The use of graphic literature, Dr. Seuss's work in particular, are materials that allows for this learning to happen. Based on this and on the answers from the participants in interviews, I believe that this thesis has revealed a gap in the educational system where there are missed opportunities for learning. Further in the discussion in section 5.3 I aim to show how the Norwegian curriculum LK20 in the English subject also opens up for teaching students about economy, capitalism and diversity.

5.2 Central ideas and opportunities for learning

There are some key ideas that reappear as we continue to explore how education on economy and capitalism through graphic literature are central in the classroom. These represent central ideas and opportunities for learning, and they provide the basis for future research in this area that I hope my thesis might inspire.

Firstly, I want to bring forward is how these key terms represent a shift in the direction of which my thesis has taken. In the beginning, I was mostly interested in investigating how economy affects students on a personal level and how the knowledge about diversity can change the way we treat one another and participate in the world. Now, after reflecting on and analyzing the stories in light of relevant theory, I understand that the matter is much more complex than anticipated and therefore needs to be seen in light of the structures of our society and our place in this structure rather than on an individual level. The analysis shows how literature can be used to teach students about the dynamics of our society, giving valuable lessons about our role in the community and the consequences of both our own actions and the actions of others. I firmly believe that by making these invisible structures visible to students by making them reflect on their own and others place in the bigger society and in the global world, they are more equipped to make autonomous and carefully considered decisions. This leads us to one of the key concepts that reappears throughout the stories, which is *responsibility*. Reading about how different processes in our society works, and the implications of these processes, gives a wider understanding of both how the society surrounding us works and our own place in this system. This allows us to make more competent and thought through decisions that have the possibility to allow personal gain while also considering surrounding factors and implications. Possessing this knowledge gives us a responsibility to use what we have learned for the better.

Furthermore, *commercializing* and *influencing* are terms that reappear in all three stories. The fact that these ideas keep getting brought up in Dr. Seuss's work reflects questions about society that is just as, if not more, relevant today as it was when his work was written in the 1950's, 60's and 70's. What these two terms have in common is the fact that they both represent, or are a part of, processes that are hidden or somewhat invisible to most people. Commercializing is something that everyone has heard about, yet the implications it has and the structure behind this might be unknown to most people, especially students who have yet to gain life-experience like adults. The same goes with influencing. Most people have heard about the concept but are unaware about how it affects individuals and our society in the bigger picture. Not asking questions about the structures or dynamics surrounding us is negative because it gives a handful of people power to make decisions on the behalf of those who are unaware. For example, if commercials about modifying your appearance appear, and these

commercials target vulnerable young people, it is crucial that we question their intentions and make the hidden process of capitalism visible. If not, corporations will continue to profit off these individuals and keep developing their marketing strategies to reach an even bigger audience. As was demonstrated in *The Lorax* (1971), the Once-ler's action has negative implications for the environment while the residents who buy the thneeds are seemingly unaware about the damage they are doing by purchasing the product. This is presented in a way that children can understand, while still educating us on economics and capitalism.

As educators, we also have the responsibility to give the students the tools to navigate the world in a thoughtful, respectful, and competent manner. For the students to feel responsible for what is happening around them and the way society is moving, they need to be aware of their place in the system as individuals, their rights, and their power. To create responsible human beings, we need to create educated individuals. We as teachers have knowledge about the society that the students do not have, which gives us a responsibility towards the students. We then need to use tools, such as Dr. Seuss's literature, to pass this responsibility down by helping the students gain knowledge. It is also crucial for our education system to teach students to reflect on how capitalism and economy is embedded into other parts of our society, how they contribute to this system and what the consequences of these actions are. Not teaching students about this could lead to uneducated citizens that are unaware of how the world works and their place in the system. Gaining a better understanding of how these processes works also allows for a bigger chance for successful participation in the world globally. Skills such as critical awareness and knowledge about social responsibility gives tools that allow for better understanding and building a global citizenship.

Capitalism acts as an underlying system, influencing most things around us such as education, the environmental crises, and the modern way of thinking. To understand how our society works, one needs to understand that capitalism is embedded into most, if not all, aspects of this structure. As we are part of this structure, this means that it also largely affects us on an individual, personal level. For example, one could reflect on the role of the educational system, like Nick Stevenson who describes an educational dilemma mentioned in the theoretical framework (Stevenson, 2010, p. 85). It is the role of the educational system to guide students to make their own decisions of what they would like to become when they grow up and enter the work market. At the same time, the educational system also tries to form students to fill occupations we need more of, so they act as a resource for the society. There is a constant tug-of-war between the interests of the individual person and the interest of the society, where the school as a system is not neutral. Now that it has been made clear that not even the educational system is neutral, one might also reflect on the place of literature in the capitalist system, specifically literature that aim to critique parts of this process.

Dr. Seuss's stories work as a critique or a warning to the capitalist ideology, yet his products and his name has ironically become money-generating machines that largely contributes to this system. Capitalism, economy, and diversity are reoccurring topics in Dr. Seuss' literature, and his work can also be used to examine the specific forms of capitalist expressions found in consumerism, while at the same time participating in that system. It is interesting to examine his work in an educational context because we want students to be critical and free thinking, and at the same time aware of the fact that we are participants in a capitalist system. As Dr. Seuss's unique stories and characters has grown to reach an international audience, so has the opportunity to make profit from his

name and creations. Here, Disneyfication is a key word that could explain this phenomenon: how one takes a story and exploits it for commercial gain and profit. It is important to acknowledge that even literature written to portray the negative aspects of economy and capitalism also can contribute to them. In practice, this means that people who can afford to access literature are more likely to be confronted with, and educated on, the topics portrayed in the stories. The repercussion of this is that people with less financial stability might be robbed of educational content and may not be given the opportunity to be educated on these important topics.

Now that we have seen in what way Dr. Seuss's literature can be considered a paradox in terms of consumerism, it is also important to look at the repercussions of this dynamic. The fact that his literature needs to be bought makes the stories unavailable for many children. There is a lesson to be found in this irony, which is that everything that happens within our capitalist system is colored by its norms, rules, and societal processes. Not even literature that aim to critique our society is neutral and knowing this can open up for reflection on how economy is embedded into everything, and that there often is an underlying desire to profit money off of consumers, even though this is not being advertised clearly for the consumer to understand.

5.3 Teaching Dr. Seuss

To become a functioning global citizen, it is crucial to learn English as it has become a lingua franca, used as a bridge for people from different countries to understand each other. Dr Seuss's literature uses poetry as a literary device in his writing, which has consequences for language learning. As mentioned earlier in the theory-section of the thesis, poetry has positive implications for language learning. As stated by McKenzie (2021), poetry has literary devices such as rhyme and rhythm, giving the audience an inspiring encounter with literature. This means that poetry fosters engagement and motivation for reading and exploring texts, in addition to working as a scaffold for language learning, allowing the reader to rely on tunes and patterns to develop their language skills (Goouch & Lambirth, 2011, in McKenzie, 2021, p. 32). The way poetry is used in Dr. Seuss's texts are quite unique, and it opens up for reflection on both language and different topics that are brought forward. Reflecting on and discussing his work is valuable training that further into the future can give skills that are needed to participate globally and reflect on global systems. This also correlates to the Norwegian Curriculum LK20, where language learning is one of the core elements: "Learning the pronunciation of phonemes, and learning vocabulary, word structure, syntax and text composition gives the pupils choices and possibilities in their communication and interaction." (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). Also, under the basic skills of LK20, unconventional language use is mentioned: "Experimenting with phonemes and speech sounds, spelling patterns and syllables to reading varied and complex texts with fluency and comprehension (...)." (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). One can draw connections to this basic skill and the different ways of using language to the poetic writing techniques in Dr. Seuss's work. The three stories I have chosen for this thesis are different in many ways, but the unique way language is used is a common denominator that they all share.

The curriculum LK20 also aligns with the societal themes and dynamics of the stories. As respect, responsibility and critical thinking are topics that reappear, this can be connected to the competence aim after year 7: "investigate ways of living and traditions in different societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect on identity and cultural belonging" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and

Training, 2020). I believe that the stories address identity and cultural belonging, and connecting the stories to capitalism and consumerism in the larger society also opens up for discussion about these topics in a more global setting. Further, the stories also can be connected to the core element working with texts in English:

(...) By reflecting on, interpreting and critically assessing different types of texts in English, the pupils shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society. Thus the pupils will develop intercultural competence enabling them to deal with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns. They shall build the foundation for seeing their own identity and others' identities in a multilingual and multicultural context. (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020).

As we see here, language and culture is closely connected and by allowing the students to reflect on the processes that drive our societies, the stories build a bridge between these two worlds. As the stories are several decades old, seeing and exploring how they fit into the world when they were written versus how they fit into the world right now also has learning opportunities for the student, giving knowledge about the development of culture and society

For example, *Horton Hears a Who* is about not being heard while *The Lorax* is about trying to voice your opinion. Together, they represent the way capitalism impacts our society. Capitalism saturates just about every part of our society, having a large impact on most decisions being made and also on the opinions we produce. Because of the way capitalism can be tied to everything, everything is colored by its ideological structures, and nothing is neutral. I would argue that the way Horton and the Whos are not being heard and the way the Lorax tries to speak up but is shut down by the Once-ler's capitalist thinking and production reflects how capitalism can restrict what we hear and limit our voices because of the power of these processes. One could argue that it illustrates a fault in our community and that it needs to be fixed. On the other hand, I would argue that the goal should not be to repair this fault, but to adapt to it. It is therefore important that we teach our students about these structures and how they impact us, so we can navigate these dynamics and developing our own opinions.

Lastly, I want to discuss how Seuss's stories could be employed as a tool in higher grade levels, despite being a children's book made for smaller children. Some might argue that the language in the stories is not complex enough to challenge higher-level students in higher classes such as upper-middle school and lower secondary school. I believe that the texts still are very relevant, but that they would need to be explored in a different way than on the lower-level classes. Reading the texts together and discussing them in plenary might not spark enough engagement or challenge. Therefore, one way of working with the stories and their message could be to try to copy Seuss's way of writing, such as rhyme pattern and making up characters, and produce new stories based on a given topic. Another way of interacting with the texts are by working with and discussing their connection to the real world. One could ask questions such as "Would this happened to us?" and "has this happened to us?" or other questions that would make the stories mirroring of the real world visible. This could help the students connect the actions of the characters to the real world. I also want to add that the work of Dr. Seuss is interesting in a historical perspective, and that this also is something one could bring into the classroom, especially for older children. Seeing how the stories have survived and has been viewed differently through different time periods, one can see how historical setting and political contexts impacts how we read stories. It also allows for a

deeper understanding of cultural significance, and the value of the stories. There are a lot more ways you could teach these stories and use them in different grade levels, but these brief examples show that they should not be taken for granted and neglected also in higher-level classes.

6 Conclusion

In the following section, I aim to present the conclusion of this thesis. Firstly, I will be presenting my main findings and takeaways from my research, before moving on to discuss implications. Further, I will present the limitations of my study and make suggestions for further research.

6.1 Main findings

As presented in the early introduction of the thesis, this research paper has two main focuses that I have aimed to explore and discuss. Firstly, I have been interested in how the topic of economy, class and capital is treated, or potentially not treated, in Norwegian EAL education. This has been researched through four interviews of in-service teachers. Further, I have aimed to explore how one can use graphic literature as tools to learn about the processes behind capitalism while also developing language skills, thus learning to navigate the world. To answer this, I developed two research questions: 1) What are the roles of economics and capitalism in the pedagogical practices of EAL in Norway? 2) How can graphic literature be a teaching tool in the EAL classroom to meet language goals and LK20 outcomes, while also producing critical thinking and economic critique in young learners? These two questions act as a basis for the thesis.

The result of the interviews of in-service teachers shows that teachers are positive to the use of graphic literature in their classroom practices, and that they are aware of its benefits especially for weak learners and regarding student engagement. However, when asked about how the topic of economy, capital and class appears in their education, most of the participants had not reflected on this question up until that point and revealed that they rarely or never explicitly educated students on these topics. Several teachers did point out how they might appear as sub-genres when teaching other topics. Because of the small sample of interview participants, the findings cannot be generalizable for the entire population of teachers in Norway. They do however point towards a trend that should be recognized and potentially explored further. I will get back to this in section 6.2, where I present the study's limitations and suggestions for further research.

Further, the analysis of the three graphic texts highlights their potentials for meeting learning goals, both in terms of language but also reflecting on processes within economy and capitalism, such as engaging in critical thinking and economic critique. The stories bring up topics that are highly relevant for education and opens up space for reflection and discussions about own identity, responsibility and place in both the smaller society and bigger global world. Additionally, the stories have great potential for language learning. The text is used in conjunction with image, which support the reader in navigating the story and comprehending its content. Furthermore, the poetic language is beneficial because it creates a pattern for the students to follow and makes the language predictable while also being unconventional and fun, thus fostering engagement and motivation.

Dr. Seuss's work speaks to us directly and urgently. His stories are appealing both in terms of language and the visual aspects, which enhances the storytelling and engages the reader. His writing and characters are unique and memorable, at the same time as they are ordinary and universal in the way they mirror the state of our own

society and world and therefore feels familiar for the reader. His stories present complex themes in a simple manner, and through storytelling and appeal to the audience, they encourage the readers to reflect on how the narrative fits into our own universe, urging us to take action. As discussed earlier, it must be mentioned that it is paradoxical for a story to critique capitalism while also contributing to the capitalist market. Yet, it has become almost inevitable to avoid contributing to this in today's world. This shows that nothing ever is neutral, not even literature or school as an arena we teach literature, and that capitalism, economy and the implications that follows these topics are embedded into most parts of our world.

6.2 Limitations and suggestions for further research

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, my sample is small, especially when it comes to the interviews of in-service teachers where I ended up only interviewing four participants. This limitation stems from a difficulty gathering participants in the limited time I had. A bigger sample would have been a positive attribution to the thesis because the findings could be more generalizable than the findings from my four interviews are. I also ended up with a selection of three stories for my comparative analysis of Seuss's work, and although I believe that these three stories demonstrate how graphic literature can be used to reflect on societal processes and develop language skills, I acknowledge that a bigger selection of literature would have been positive. Due to a limited time frame this was not possible for me, but I encourage other researchers to build on this and employ my findings to further explore the topics I have explored in this thesis.

Another limitation that should be acknowledged is my change of terminology throughout the thesis. At the start of the writing process, I used the term "graphic novel" for my chosen literature, which I ended up changing to "graphic literature" or "graphic texts", as argued in the methodical framework under 3.1.1., terminology. When changing my choice of wording, I had already conducted some of my interviews. Although all of my participants were given the same definition of the terms, which mostly focused on multimodality, this might have affected the answers I got from my participants. I do however believe that this course of events is both a weakness and a strength, because it also shows the dynamic nature of my thesis and points towards a personal learning curve for me.

I hope that my work inspires other researchers to explore the topic of economy and class in relation to graphic literature further. As mentioned earlier in this section, I encourage others to continue the research using bigger samples of both interview participants and literature. One could also shift the focus to also include pre-service teachers and their preparedness, and thus exploring the role of teacher-education in relation to my chosen topics. Further, it could also be interesting to more extensively explore Seuss's work in a historical setting, seeing how the meaning of his work has changed over time and has contributed to political debates in different eras of time. Lastly, I believe that the topic of economy and capital in relation to graphic literature and language education is severely underdeveloped and carry a lot of potential that I hope other researchers continue to shed light on.

List of references

- Arikan, A. (2002). Chapter nine: *Critical media literacy and ESL/EFL classrooms*. *Counterpoints*, 176, 113-124.
- Brown, C.W. (2021). *Taking action through redesign: Norwegian EFL learners engaging in critical visual literacy practices*. *Journal of Visual Literacy*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1051144X.2021.1994732>
- Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.). Capitalism. *In Cambridge Dictionary*.
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/capitalism>
- Chute, H. L. (2017). *Why comics?: from underground to everywhere* (1st ed.). Harper.
- Collins Dictionary (n.d.). Poetics. *In Collins Dictionary*.
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/poetics>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. David. (2018). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative & mixed methods approaches*. (5th edition.). Sage.
- Engels, F. (1933). A Letter to Franz Mehring. Transl. S. Hook in *Towards an Understanding of Karl Marx*. New York. p. 341
- Ginsberg, M. B. (2005). *Cultural diversity, motivation, and differentiation*. *Theory into practice*, 44(3), 218-225.
- Heinemann, A. M. B., & Monzó, L. (2021). *Capitalism, migration, and adult education. Toward a critical project in the second language learning class*. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 12(1), 65–79.
<https://doi.org/10.3384/rela.2000-7426.ojs3464>
- Hintz, C., & Tribunella, E. L. (2019). *Reading children's literature: a critical introduction* (Second edition.). Broadview Press.
- Kessler, M. (2022). *Multimodality*. *ELT Journal*, 76(4), 551–554.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccac028>
- Magazzini, T. (2021). Chapter 15: In the Eye of the Beholder? Minority Representation and the Politics of Culture. Nikielska-Sekula, K. & Amandine, D. (Ed.). *Visual Methodology in Migration Studies: New possibilities, Theoretical implications, and Ethical Questions*. Springer.
- Maagerø, E., & Tønnessen, E. S. (2022). Multimodal Literacy in English as an Additional Language. In *Multimodality in English Language Learning* (1st ed., pp. 27–38). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003155300-3>
- Magnusson, P., & Godhe, A.-L. (2019). Multimodality in Language Education – Implications for Teaching. *Designs for Learning*, 11(1), 127–137.
<https://doi.org/10.16993/df1.127>
- Marx, K. (1844, 1972). "Estranged Labour." In *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd Ed. Ed. R. Tucker. pp. 70-81.
- Marx, K. (1867). The fetishism of commodities and the secret thereof. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, 1, 71-83.

- McKenzie, P. (2021). Picture Books That Pop. *Rocky Mountain Review (Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association)*, 75(1), 27–44.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/rmr.2021.0001>
- McTaggart, J. (2008). Graphic novels: The good, the bad and the ugly. In *Teaching visual literacy using comic books, graphic novels, anime, cartoons and more to develop comprehension and thinking skills*, eds. N. Frey, and D. Fisher, 27–46. Corvin Press.
- Nel, P. (2003). The Disneyfication of Dr Seuss: faithful to profit, one hundred percent? *Cultural Studies (London, England)*, 17(5), 579–614.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0950238032000126847>
- Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. (2020). Curriculum in English (ENG01-04). Established as a regulation. The curriculum for Kunnskapsløftet 2020.
<https://www.udir.no/lk20/ENG01-04>
- Rose, G. (2016). *Visual methodologies: an introduction to researching with visual materials* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Schwarz, G. (2006). *Expanding literacies through graphic novels*. *English Journal*, 58-64.
- SeaWorld (n.d.). Hearing. In *SeaWorld Organization*. Accessed March 21st from
<https://seaworld.org/animals/all-about/elephants/senses/>
- Serafini, F., & Gee, J. P. (2014). *Reading the visual: an introduction to teaching multimodal literacy* (pp. XIII, 189). Teachers College Press.
- Seuss, T. (1961, 1989) *The Sneetches and other stories*. Random House.
- Seuss, T. (1954, 1982). *Horton hears a Who*. Random House.
- Seuss, T. (1971, 1999). *The Lorax*. Random House.
- Stevenson, N. (2010). Critical Pedagogy, Democracy, and Capitalism: Education Without Enemies or Borders. *The Review of Education/pedagogy/cultural Studies*, 32(1), 66–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714410903482674>
- Tjernshaugen, A. & Tjora, A. (2022). sosioøkonomisk. In *Store Norske Leksikon*.
<https://snl.no/sosioøkonomisk>
- Viggen, H. (2023). Dr. Seuss. In *Store Norske Leksikon*. https://snl.no/Dr._Seuss
- Youngs, S. (2012). *Understanding History through the Visual Images in Historical Fiction*. *Language Arts*, 89(6), 379–395.
- Žižek, S. (1989). *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. Verso: pp. 25-26

Appendices

Appendix 1: interview protocol

- Introducing myself (name, field of study, age etc.)
- Introducing masters' thesis
 - o This interview will be a part of my master's thesis, which aims to research how to use graphic literature as a tool to teach about the topics of socioeconomic minorities and class.
 - o To clarify, I will specify how I define some of the main terms. My definition of socioeconomics is taken from a Norwegian lexicon called Store Norske Leksikon (SNL), where the term is defined as a technical term that has to do with both social and economic conditions, linked to the interaction between the social and the economic. (Tjernshaugen & Tjora, 2022). It is often used as a synonym for social class, which is also a term used frequently in the interview and in the master's thesis.
 - o Graphic literature is literature that contains visual aspects such as pictures in conjunction with text. In my master's thesis, I am concerned with the interaction between text and images, and how the visual aspect of literature has an impact on how we perceive and understand what we read.
- The recording is anonymous and you are therefore advised not to share personal details that allows you to be identified.
- Do you have any questions for me before we start?

Appendix 2: Interview questions

General information

1. What grade do you currently teach?
2. What is your age?
3. What are your teaching qualifications? (Bachelors, masters, PHD etc.)
4. What subjects do you teach?
5. How long have you been teaching for?

Questions in relation to topic

6. Have you used graphic literature in EAL education?
 - a. If yes: for what purpose did you use the graphic texts?
 - b. If yes: how was your experience in doing this?
 - c. If no: why have you not introduced graphic texts?
7. Have you ever used literature from the author Dr. Seuss or other texts that deal with socioeconomic issues related to economic status and class?
 - a. If yes: how was your experience in doing this?
 - b. If no: why have you not done this?
8. Does the topic of economy and class occur as a part of your teaching?
 - a. If yes: in what ways? Do you have any concrete examples?
 - b. If no: why does it not appear?
9. Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix 3: Transcription of interviews

Appendix 3 A, interview 1

I: interviewer

O1: interview object 1

Generell informasjon

I: Hvilken klasse underviser du i?

O1: 5. Trinn.

I: Hva er din alder?

O1: 34.

I: Hvilken utdannelse har du?

O1: Jeg har allmenlærerutdanning, så 4. åring utdanning 5-10, også har jeg også faglære musikk.

I: OK.

O1: Gikk mye på høyskole.

I: Ja, da sa du jo litt om hvilke fag du underviser i og. Da er det musikk..

O1: Jeg har musikk, jeg har norsk, jeg har engelsk, stasjonsundervisning, så det er litt forskjellig. Det er det jeg har i år, men jeg har i løpet av årene på skolen her hatt de aller fleste fag, jeg holder meg unna matte.

I: Ja.

O1: Det er det eneste.

I: Ja, skjønner. Hvor lenge har du jobbet som lærer?

O1: Eeeh, jeg er på det niende året nå. Så åtte hele år, da.

I: Ja, bra. Så var det litt spørsmål i sammenheng med tema, da.

O1: Mhm.

Spørsmål i sammenheng med tema

I: Har du brukt grafisk litteratur i undervisning hvor engelsk er tilleggsspråk?

O1: Eeehm, ja.. Det har jeg vell gjort. Har brukt litt sånn bildebøker og sånt i.. på tavla, ehm.. Og også at elevene har fått lest det selv. Men det er vell kanskje mer bruk av bildebøker i sånn undervisningssammenheng da eller?

I: Nei, bare generelt ja egentlig. Er det mest det formålet du har brukt det til?

O1: Ja, for eksempel har vi bøker som er mye støttet opp med bilder og tekst og sånt, som de kan få lese på stasjoner, og sånne ting da. Også er det jo for at de skal.. det er jo litt kjekt å ha bilder med bøker oppe på tavla, når vi skal fortelle historie og sånt. Så

da har de litt mer... Når de heftet det på bilder opplever jeg at de kanskje husker mer og, sånn at det..

I: Så du opplever det som noe positivt?

O1: Ja. Det synes jeg. Spesielt på engelsk tror jeg at det er litt greit at det er litt blanding av bilder og tekst. For at de er jo fortsatt små, og har ikke hatt engelsk så lenge. Det tror jeg er lurt.

I: Ja.

O1: mhm.

I: Har du noen gang brukt litteratur fra barnebokforfatteren Dr. Seuss eller andre tekster som omhandler det her med sosioøkonomiske minoriteter og klasseforskjeller i klasserommet?

O1: Ikke av Dr. Seuss, har jeg ikke brukt. Ehm, men noe... jeg må tenke meg om. Jeg skulle tenke på det i går, så glemte jeg det litt av, haha!

I: Haha, det går fint.

O1: Klasseforskjeller og sånt og ja... hm..

I: Fattigdom og økonomi og litt sånne tema..

O1: Ja... Jeg vet ikke om det går inn under det, men vi har brukt, i Norsk brukte vi «Sinna Mann», eller det var vell i forbindelse med noe undervisning med SMISO som vi hadde, da ble «Sinna mann» brukt ehh.. altså bøkene til Gro Dahle og Svein Nyhus ble brukt littegrann da. De har jo mye ofte litt sånn andre tema bak. Ehh, og så... åh, vi har jo lest masse bøker men jeg kommer ikke på en eneste en, haha.

I: Haha, neida men det går helt fint det.

O1: Ja, men vi har lest mye sånn bøker på mellomtrinnet som går mye på det at det er noen som er ulike på et vis. Enten i at de, jeg kommer ikke på noen spesifikke bøker men at det er noen som skiller seg ut. Enten at de er, ja, fattige eller annerledes. Vi skal blant annet lese et bokprosjekt med «Lars er LOL», som er veldig aktuell nå. Da er det jo ei som blir fadder på en med downs syndrom.

I: Ja.

O1: Så det er litt sånn.. Rundt det da. Så det er ofte bøker, fordi jeg opplever at når man leser bøker til de og sånt så klarer de å sette seg inn i temaene på et litt annet vis enn når de ser seg selv ute i en konflikt eller at man sier ser dere at det er forskjell her så er det vanskelig å se det. Det er mye lettere å se det i en film eller i en bok, for da klarer de liksom å se det litt sånn utenifra, og se mer helhetsperspektivet.

I: mhm.

O1: Så synes jeg det er veldig fint å bruke bøker som grunnlag for samtale om ulikhet, da.

I: Ja.

O1: Mellom folk og i samfunnet. Fordi de er veldig kjappe på å se at dette ble urettferdig eller hvorfor har han eller hun det sånn? Det er jo ikke greit. Det er de kjempeflinke til å se når man har samtale om bøker og sånne ting, kanskje ikke alltid like flinke til å se det IRL.

I: ja, sant. Kjempeinteressant. Mer sånn generelt hvis man ser bort fra dette med bildebøker og sånt, dukker det her temaet økonomi og klasse opp som en del av undervisningen din?

O1: Ehh.. Det dukker jo opp litt innimellom, kanskje hvis vi ser supernytt, eller.. og de ser at noe er urettferdig i forbindelse med krig for eksempel, som de dessverre ser litt av på supernytt. Eller, ja, både bra og ikke kanskje.

I: Mhm.

O1: ehhm, så dukker det opp og da er det ofte at ting er urettferdig, og at de ser sånne ting. Men jeg ser jo også at det er jo litt, kan ofte dukke opp at vi må ta det opp ehh, som en del av livsmestringsfaget også. Fordi det er forskjeller på folk og hva folk har råd til.

I: mhm.

O1: Jeg har jo også vært på trinn tidligere der man har måttet snakke litt om det, fordi at noen synes det er veldig sårt. At alle har råd tid alt, og at ja, hvis de ødelegger den iphonen så får de jo en ny iphone.

I: Ja, sant.

O1: For her er det veldig mange som har veldig mye, i området her.

I: Ja, mhm.

O1: også er det de som har lite, har veldig lite. Så det merkes, det merkes jo veldig godt for de som spesielt sitter å opplever at de har lite. Og da er det ofte noe man må ta opp og snakke om da, at det, ja. Det med veldig sånn fokus på merkeklær er jo kanskje det man merker mest på mellomtrinnet.

I: Ja..

O1: Ja..

I: Ja, det har vi sett litt av.

O1: Man burde ha de skoene, og ja, det er jo ikke alt vi klarer å snappe opp.

I: Nei..

O1: Men du må ha de skoene. Du må ikke ha noe fake versjon av dem.

I: Ja. Det er sånn ja.

O1: Ja, dessverre.

I: Det var egentlig det jeg lurte på, også om det er noe du vil legge som du føler at du ikke har fått sagt?

O1: Ikke som jeg kommer på, jeg håper at du får noe fornuftig ut av det jeg...

I: Ja, det er kjempebra det.

Appendix 3 B, interview 2

I: interviewer

O2: interview object 2

Generell informasjon

I: Hvilken klasse underviser du i?

O2: I år er det femte. Så jeg er stort sett på mellomtrinnet, femte til sjuende.

I: Og så alderen din?

O2: 55.

I: Hvilken utdanning har du?

O2: Jeg har lærerutdanning, med.. hva skal jeg si, videreutdanning i Engelsk og musikk.

I: Ja. Mhm. Hvilke fag underviser du i? Da er det Engelsk og musikk, eller?

O2: Mest det.

I: Mhm. Hvor lenge har du jobbet som lærer?

O2: i trettien år.

Spørsmål i sammenheng med tema

I: Trettien år, ja. Ja, så er det sånn at jeg ikke har veldig mange spørsmål om tema, men det er tre spørsmål som handler om det her med grafisk litteratur og sosioøkonomi. Ehm, og det første spørsmålet er: Har du brukt grafisk litteratur i din undervisning hvor engelsk er tilleggsspråk?

O2: Ja, det har jeg.

I: Til hvilket formål brukte du den grafiske litteraturen?

O2: Ehm, det er jo for å på en måte lene meg litt på det visuelle uttrykket. Jeg opplever nok at, i min tid nå som lærer så har elevene blir mer og mer visuelt orienterte, så det å på en måte ha en kombinasjon av det visuelle og det, ja hva skal jeg si, språket da, eller det, teksten.. Er en god løsning. Ja.

I: Og da opplever du at dette gikk bra eller?

O2: Ja, jeg opplevde jo at ehm, dette var en Dr. Seuss bok, da, og, at de på en måte fryder seg over illustrasjonene ikke sant? Og at det var lett å knytte det til teksten, og at det ga.. ga en, hva skal jeg si, en tilleggs.. ehh.. ja at det ble en enda bedre opplevelse. Og kanskje spesielt for dem som strever litt. At det ble på en måte, de ble litt mer trygge eller kunne få litt hjelp til å fordøye teksten eller prosessere teksten gjennom også bildene. Det ga mer mening for de, da.

I: Mhm, ja. Spennende. Da er jo neste spørsmål.. Det har du egentlig svart litt på, for det er jo om du noen gang har brukt litteratur fra Dr. Seuss eller andre tekster som omhandler sosioøkonomiske minoriteter eller klasseforskjeller i klasserommet, da?

O2: ja, jeg kan ikke si at jeg har spesifikt tatt det inn imot sosiokulturelt og.. ja, det kan jeg ikke si. Men det å kunne fordøye hva det er som står der, og det er klart at en Dr. Seuss bok er jo mer blåttlyst (???), men det ligger jo forøvrigt et budskap i det som man kan jobbe videre med, da. Så jeg tror jo at gjennom det visuelle så er det kanskje enda lettere å på en måte leve seg inn i, for mange elever.

I: Ehm, dukker dette.. Hvis vi ser bort fra dette med grafisk litteratur og sånn da, dukker tema økonomi og klasse og sånt opp som en del av din undervisning?

O2: Eh, ja, sånn litt tematisk så gjør den det. Gjennom, hva skal jeg si, kompetansemål som har med, det kan ha både med deres, hva skal jeg si, opplevelse av sin språkutvikling, det kan jo også ha litt ulike, hvor de kommer i fra rett og slett, både om de er etnisk norske eller ikke, eh, ja, hva bakgrunnen familiært de på en måte sitter eller er i, da. Men så kan det også være kompetansemål som har med, eh, engelsk, hva skal jeg si, litteratur å gjøre, eh, også det med, hva skal jeg si, språk og samfunn, det finnes egne kompetansemål for det og sånn at man skal sammenligne litt det norske vs. Det engelske ikke sant, og da kan det være naturlig å komme inn på samfunnsforhold i Norge VS. I ulike engelskspråklige land. Det er jo stort sett Storbritannia og USA og Australia som på en måte blir reflektert i ulike, hva skal jeg si, lærerverk som vi benytter i allefall.

I: Ja. Ehm, egentlig er jo neste spørsmål om du har noen konkrete eksempler, men jeg synes jo egentlig at det du sier, det virker jo som at du har brukt det i undervisning og at det er noe du har tatt i bruk, da. Er det noe du har lyst til å legge til om det her temaet, eller som du har lyst til å si på slutten?

O2: Ja, nei, altså jeg kan jo komme med et helt helt konkret eksempel. Det er at vi for eksempel har jobbet med tekster om det stone generation i Australia. De blir portrettert i veldig mange, eller flere lærerverk, som aboriginernes kamp for, ja, egne rettigheter, og urfolk og, ja, hvordan australia på en måte behandla de og offentlig gikk ut og sa unnskyld for det. Og med konkrete eksempler med ei som tok med seg lillesøstra si og gikk langs dette gjerdet og kom seg hjem igjen, ikkesant. Så det er klart, det er jo stort tema, det blir også da veldig sånn synlig for elevene, det er jo også filmatisert, vi kom aldri så langt at vi så den filmen, men det burde vi kanskje ha gjort, sånn for å forsterke dette budskapet ytterligere, da.

I: Det er jo veldig interessant at man kan lene seg på det grafiske på et annet vis når man har mulighet til å se på film i tillegg. Mhm. Nei, men da har hvertfall ikke jeg flere spørsmål. Så, tusen takk for intervju.

Appendix 3 C, interview 3

I: interviewer

O3: interview object 3

Generell informasjon

I: Hvilken klasse underviser du i?

O3: Jeg underviser på 9.trinn.

I: Hva er alderen din?

O3: Jeg er 24 år gammel.

I: Hvilken utdanning har du?

O3: Jeg har 5-10 grunnskolelærerutdanning, fra NTNU.

I: Hvilke fag underviser du i?

O3: I Norsk, Engelsk, mat og helse, samfunnsfag og medier og kommunikasjon,

I: Hvor lenge har du jobbet som lærer?

O3: I ett år, nå i november.

Spørsmål i sammenheng med tema

I: Har du brukt grafisk litteratur i din undervisning hvor engelsk er tilleggsspråk?

O3: Jeg har ikke hatt muligheten til det enda, har jeg ikke.

I: Er det noe du ønsker å gjøre i fremtiden?

O3: Absolutt, jeg ser stor nytte av å bruke grafiske virkemidler når man lærer seg språk.

I: Mhm. Har du noen gang brukt litteratur fra barnebokforfatteren Dr. Seuss eller andre tekster som omhandler dette med sosioøkonomiske minoriteter og klasseforskjeller i klasserommet?

O3: Ehm, nei ikke praktisk sett. Jeg har kun hatt teorien om det.

I: Ja, mhm. Ser du noe nytte av å ta med dette inn i klasserommet?

O3: Absolutt, jeg tror at multimodale tekster kan hjelpe elever som både er sterke og svake, og hjelpe til med å treffe alle, til å forstå mer det som ligger bak. Det er jo et stort samspill mellom tekst og bilder, men også bilder i seg selv, den der lille sayingen om at «bilder sier mer enn tusen ord», og sammen så får man jo en my dypere forståelse. Man kan jo lese masse ut av bilder og farger, og det er jo så mye bak det. Jeg tror at man kan få mye mer ut av å bruke multimodale tekster enn typiske lærebøker.

I: Dukker noen gang temaet økonomi og klasse opp som en del av din undervisning?

O3: Nå er jeg så heldig at jeg har samfunnsfag i tillegg, som jeg egentlig ikke har undervisningskompetanse i, og der ser jeg jo stort samspill mellom samfunnsfagen og engelsken. Og jeg ser også at mange av temaene kan brukes begge plasser, eh,

foreløpig har vi ikke kommet så mye inn på sånne tema, men det er absolutt et viktig tema som jeg tror kommer til å komme snart på vår årsplan.

I: Har du noen konkrete eksempler på hvor du tror det dukker opp?

O3: Hmm, vi har jo en del konflikter og kriger som foregår, som man kan trekke både klasseforskjeller og økonomi inn i. Ehm, i tillegg til at vi da får flyktninger inn til vårt land, som er nødt til å sette seg inn i disse forståelsene, som også våre elever drar nytte av. Ehm, og, mye av det å forstå hvordan hvem vi er kommer fra hvor vi er fra, eller hvem vi er fra, ehm, og jeg tror det også er en viktig del av dette med byggingen av samspillet i klassen. At man tar oppsluke tema.

I: Har du noe du har lyst til å legge til på slutten? Jeg har egentlig ikke noen flere spørsmål enn det, om det er noe du følte at du ikke fikk sagt eller.. om du har noen spørsmål eller..

O3: Det er jo så mye man kan si rundt sånne tema. Ehm, så jeg blir sikkert sittende igjen etterpå å tenke på mye jeg skulle sagt.

I: Ja, sånn er det jo. Men det er jo.. på en måte.. Ut i fra de spørsmålene jeg stiller er det jo litt begrensa hva du får muligheten til å si også, på en måte, så du må ikke tenke på det etterpå.

O3: Neida, eh, men jeg tror også at når man i engelsken ser på, det skal man jo innom en del forskjellige språk og kulturer og land, og da er det viktig å se på disse temaene også, for å forstå andre, for vi blir jo litt sånn i vår egen boble, i vårt eget land, i vår egen klasse og kultur, og for å bli en bedre medborger og samfunnsborger og en del av verden er vi nødt til å se på andre land og alle forskjeller.

I: Kjempebra. Jeg kjenner meg veldig igjen at man kan si mye om temaet her.

Appendix 3 D, interview 4

I: interviewer

O4: interview object 4

Generell informasjon

I: Hvilken klasse underviser du i?

O4: 7. Trinn

I: Hva er alderen din?

O4: 54

I: Hvilken utdanning har du?

O4: Adjunkt med tilleggsutdanning

I: Hvilke fag underviser du i?

O4: Engelsk, Musikk, Norsk.

I: Hvor lenge har du jobbet som lærer?

O4: I mer enn 30år.

Spørsmål i sammenheng med tema

I: Har du brukt grafisk litteratur i din undervisning hvor engelsk er tilleggsspråk?

O4: Hvor engelsk er..?

I: Tilleggsspråk. Altså i Engelsk-timen i Norge da, blir det.

O4: Åja, sånn ja. Eh, ja.

I: Hvilket formål har du brukt dem til?

O4: i engelskundervisningen.

I: Er det noen spesielle tema eller..?

O4: Eeh, det husker jeg ikke. Men jeg husker jeg har brukt den «lille larven, aldri mett», «Hungry caterpillar» når de var yngre, for da, da valgte jeg den fordi det var en bok de kjente til fra de var små slik at de lett kunne.. at de hadde noen knagger å henge det på. Så brukte vi den «The day the crayons disappeared» eller, ja. På 5.trinn. Det var en bok som var veldig fengende da, for barna. Det var for å få aktivisert dem på en måte, med både bilde og visuelt. Så fikk de det lest opp så det også ble auditivt.

I: Ja. Så du opplever det som positivt, da? Å bruke og trekke inn det i timene?

O4: Eh, de to konkrete eksemplene her har vært positive iallfall.

I: Ja, mhm.

(Intervju avbrytes av annen lærer som ønsker å stille spørsmål til intervjuobjekt 4).

I: Sånn, eh, har du noen gang brukt litteratur fra barnebokforfatteren Dr. Seuss eller andre tekster som omhandler dette med sosioøkonomiske minoriteter og klasseforskjeller i klasserommet? Som kanskje har det som underliggende tema?

O4: Nei, ikke bevisst i hvertfall.

I: Nei. Ehm, har du...

O4: Og han forfatteren har jeg ikke...

I: Ikke brukt han nei? Nei. Dukker noen gang temaet økonomi og klasse opp som en del av din undervisning?

O4: Ikke som jeg kommer på, ikke bevisst. Det er ikke noe tema, at nå skal vi ha dette som tema nei, men det kommer jo sikkert fram i noen av tekstene. Vi har for eksempel hatt om engelskspråklige land, utover England, det hadde vi før jul og da kom det jo opp litt forskjellige bakgrunner som barna hadde, fra Jamaica og Sør-Afrika og.. ja... Men det var ikke sånn at nå skal vi ha fokus på klasse og økonomi.

I: Det er egentlig alle spørsmålene mine. Har du noe du har lyst til å legge til på slutten? om det er noe du følte at du ikke fikk sagt eller..

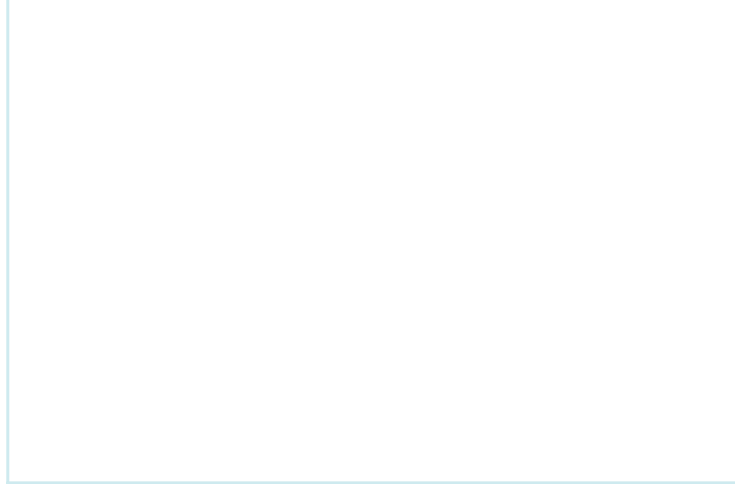
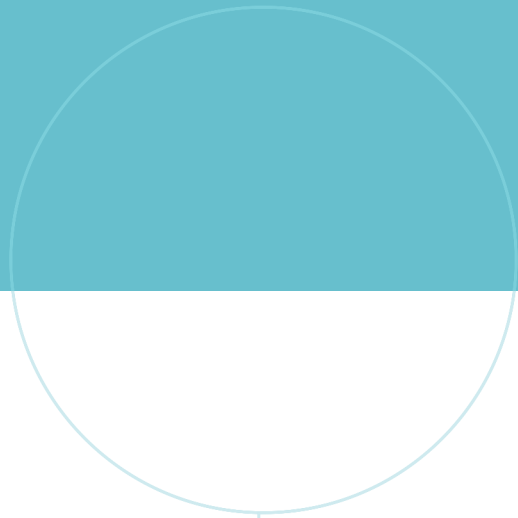
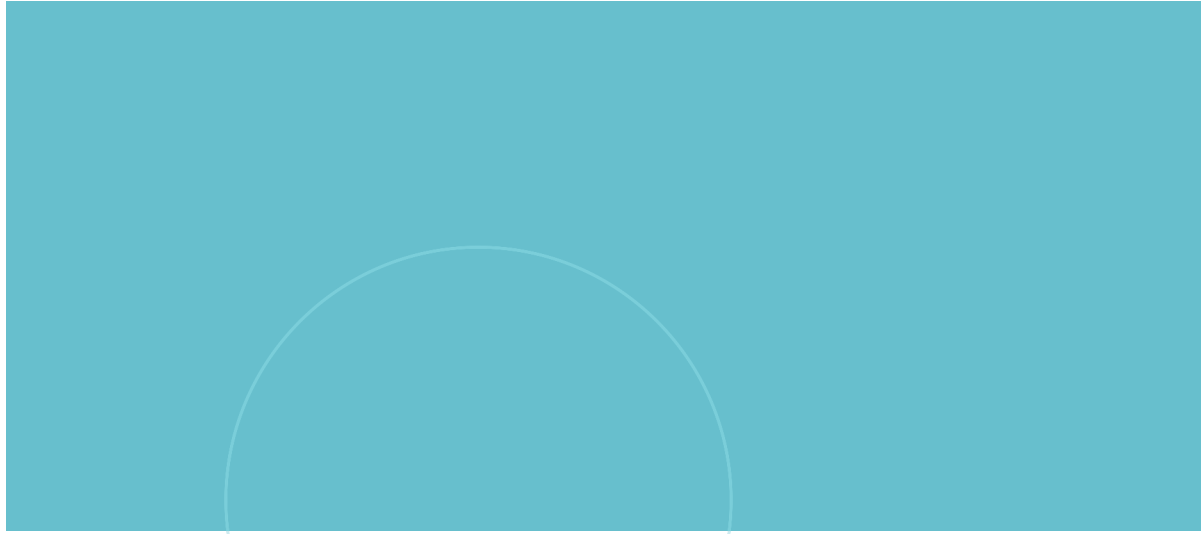
O4: Ikke som jeg kommer på nei.

I: Nei. Da takker jeg for intervju.

Appendix 4: Overview, interview findings

Interview number	Teacher information	Economy, poverty, and diversity	Graphic novels
1	34 Y/O, worked as teacher for 8 years. Teaches 5 th grade. 4-year teacher education. educates subjects music, Norwegian, English. Have taught most subjects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have educated students on diversity but not explicitly on poverty - Poverty as an underlying theme when watching news for kids "Supernytt" - Have experienced the need for class-discussions about economy and poverty, because of an increased focus on designer items and expensive electronics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graphic novels help the students remember more - Pictures help students understand the text better - See situations from the outside, understanding the bigger picture - Using graphic novels as a baseline for talking about diversity
2	55 Y/O, worked as teacher for 31 years. Teaches 5 th grade. Teacher education with further education in English and music. Mostly teaches English and music.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have not worked explicitly on poverty or economy - Have had discussions in class about where you come from and the students' backgrounds, that they are different - Have worked with competence aims on comparing English- and Norwegian speaking countries and how they are different socially. - Worked with stone generation in Australia as an example. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive experience leaning on the visual expression - Have observed that the students are getting more visually oriented - Used Dr. Seuss book, students had positive attitudes and enjoyed it. - visual aspects allow for a better experience, especially for weaker learners. - Weaker students feel safer processing the text through pictures, more meaningful interaction for them.
3	24 Y/O, worked as a teacher for 1 year, teaches 9 th grade, teacher education 5-10 th grade. Teaches subjects Norwegian, English, food&health (?), social sciences and media and communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Big relation between subjects social science and English - We have conflicts and wars that could be discussed in classroom and that open for talk about class and economy. - Talking about these topics allows for a better class environment. - We are very self-centered around own culture and class, important to open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive to using graphic novels when learning language. - Multimodal texts are good for both weak and strong learners. Helps understand underlying meaning. "a picture says more than a thousand words", gives a deeper understanding. - One can get a lot of information from pictures and colors, and there is a lot of information behind this. More positive towards multimodal text than typical textbooks.

		eyes to other countries, cultures and classes to become a better citizen and participant in the society.	
4	54 Y/O, worked as teacher for more than 30 years, teaches 7 th grade, has 4 years teacher education with additional education. Teaches English, music and Norwegian.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have not worked explicitly on poverty or economy as topics. - Thinks the topics might appear as a part of some texts but is not sure. - Has not taught classes with explicit focus on class or economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not remember clearly what occasion, but has used "The hungry caterpillar" and "The day the crayons disappeared". They feel that the visual aspect of the books engages the students. - Has used graphic literature that the students are familiar with from when they were younger so they have some knowledge about them. - The two stories/books used has been positive for education. - Has never used Dr. Seuss 's work in education.



 **NTNU**

Norwegian University of
Science and Technology