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DEBATE, SOCIAL CRITICISM AND RHETORIC IN

THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS: AN ANALYSIS OF STRATEGY

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

In

English Composition

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by

Ellen Irene Elfstrom

June 1991

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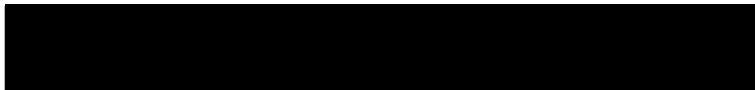
California State University,

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by

Ellen Irene Elfstrom

June 1991

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Abstract

Numerous critics have examined <u>The Left Hand of Darkness</u> by discussing the elements which combine to help make meaning for the reader. However, none have approached the text strictly as a rhetorical instrument. Ursula K. Le Guin uses debate as a rhetorical strategy to explore and define the social issues of xenophobia, sex-role stereotyping, and alienation as a means of inducing elevated social awareness on these issues.

In this thesis, I first examine the social issues of xenophobia, sex-role stereotyping and alienation through discussion of a selection of representative critical works. Next, I examine the structure of the text to delineate how Le Guin uses debate, taking into consideration her use of multiple narrators and mythic material. Separating the chapters into levels of debate, I show how the author uses each level. I demonstrate how she uses the first section to introduce the social issues, the second to draw the reader into closer understanding of the issues and how those issues may affect humans, and the third to supply a clear alternative way of thinking about those issues as well as an implied model of action for the reader to consider. Each section is further broken down into groupings of three chapters, and each grouping is discussed in relation to its contribution to the progression of the debate.

Next in the examination is a discussion of how the

metaphors of the travel/quest motif, the low-tech culture of the inhabitants of Gethen, and the condition of androgyny, as well as light/dark imagery, work together within the textual structure to support the debate and the progression of increased awareness.

Finally, I evaluate how well the structure, selected metaphors and imagery give evidence of this debate by using Kenneth Burke's concept of mind-body pairing as criteria. I examine the rhetorical effectiveness of these components and conclude that this congruence of elements works well to highlight the social issues in the text.

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Chapter I: Social Issues in the Text

Rhetorical criticism of any work requires that the critic look at the text not from the perspective of what it means, but how it functions in achieving an end (Abrams 21). Any work, seen as an instrument designed to achieve an end, would then be evaluated on the basis of how well it has succeeded in achieving its specific aim. This type of criticism, therefore, usually examines a text and seeks to ascertain the elements which contribute to the overall effect of the work. It can be surmised that from this examination, the critic can gain significant insights into the workings of a text by concentrating on the rhetorical strategies which seem to be operating within it (Corbett xviii). Ursula K. Le Guin's novel, The Left Hand of Darkness, has been scrutinized by literary critics seeking to establish meaning, and her novel was so well-loved as to receive both the top science fiction awards, the Nebula and the Hugo, and find itself in its thirty-fourth reprint.[1] However, it seems a valuable endeavor to look at her work not only from the point of view of what the text seems to carry in meaning, but from the perspective of how she managed to engender such a response. Therefore, the following analysis will not be founded on deriving meaning from the text, but will instead approach the book by examining a selection of elements comprising the text to develop a clearer understanding of

rhetorical strategy within it.

The primary strategy proposed in this analysis is the author's use of a debate. Debate, as an action, generally can be understood as the participation of people in either a public or private discussion, usually with the understanding that some sort of opposition exists between the partici- pants. As a noun, debate's most common meaning is the con- sideration of a problem or proposition through a regulated discussion. At the base of all debate is the general idea of a problem or proposition which is derived from the interac- tion of members of a group or society. The ends of debate can be generally understood as either to resolve the prob- lem, to develop in the participants (those who observe the debate can be considered participants also) a greater aware- ness of the parameters of the problem, and/or to explore the nature of the proposition and its consequences. The use of the debate is suggested here as a contributing means of developing the author's consideration of social issues in order to heighten the awareness of her "participants."

The social issues in the text have been discussed and examined by Le Guin's critics in over 130 articles, as well as a number of book chapters, since 1970. Three arise re- peatedly: ethnocentrism/xenophobia, alienation, and sex-role stereotyping. These are by no means isolated issues, nor are they the unwavering focus of any critical work surveyed, for the interplay of issues and supportive material is fraught

with overlaps and multiple sub-issues to the extent that a literary critic focusing only on one of these would do a great injustice to the text. However, for the purposes of this analysis, only the above-mentioned major issues which have been more generally acknowledged will be considered within the debate.

Representative examples of the criticism focusing on these social issues can be found in writings by Karen Sinclair, Peter T. Koper, and Craig and Diana Barrow. Sinclair's piece, "Solitary Being: The Hero as Anthropologist," emphasizes the author's theme of xenophobia while suggesting that Le Guin "challenges the parochialism and xenophobia so often characteristic of the insider's point of view" (55). He thinks that xenophobia, defined as the fear and hatred of anyone or anything foreign or different, is the "major subject in this novel" (56), and this critic describes the developing relationship between the two main protagonists as significant to the theme.

Also significant to the understanding of social issues present in the text is Peter T. Koper's essay in <u>Ursula K. Le Guin: Voyager to Inner Lands and Outer Space</u> (De Bolt). He focuses in part on Genly Ai's situation, which he cites as developing the power of the novel by presenting an "isolated hero in the midst of a culture that is alien" (80), and this condition evokes problems for the hero which affect his sense of sexual identity:

The pressure of his sexually ambiguous surroundings on Genly Ai is a mirror of the pressure which our culture's plethora of sexual roles and liberation movements places upon the sense of identity of its members. (80)

Koper also suggests a parallel relationship between the problem of sexual identity which he sees as well represented in the text and a concurrent dilemma found in the concept of intellectual identity and the demands of science. He suggests that even though one is to remain "open" (read "skeptical"), science demands that individuals obtain knowledge to function appropriately in that sphere, "but knowledge is, inherently, closure" (80). The comparison of these two types of "open" and "closed" aspects of identity, whether sexual or intellectual, provides an interesting underscoring of the alienation and sex-role stereotyping issues discussed.

One of the most frequently studied aspects of Le Guin's novel is her use of androgynous beings. This element has stimulated critics to examine the effects of this ingredient. Craig and Diana Barrow acknowledge the importance of androgyny in Le Guin's approach to social commentary in their article, "The Left Hand of Darkness: Feminism for Men." They propose that while the author seems to address feminism issues of value in her text, she does so by providing for women only "one-half of a person with whom they can psychologically connect while men have one and one-half,

Genly Ai and Estraven" (83). The Barrows assert that Le Guin's audience, however, is men and other science-fiction writers, although the character of Genly Ai works not to reaffirm the male attitudes but to reveal and explore them.[2] For these critics, Estraven's role provides a "significant other" for Genly and an embodiment of androgyny and wholeness of being against which Genly's representative preconceptions must eventually collide and disintegrate (87,94).

While these three articles are representative of the major trends in social issues associated with the text, Le Guin herself offers insights about their presence in the 1976 version of her article, "Is Gender Necessary?". There, she suggests that the LHD was her way of ruminating about what had gathered in her unconsciousness on the subjects of sexuality and gender (prompted by the milieu of the times); yet she explicitly denied at that time that the "real" subject of the book was "sex, gender, or anything of the sort," saying instead that, as she saw it, "it [was] about betrayal and fidelity" (8). The androgynous Gethenians were to her a "process," a way of thinking about questions she had asked herself on those subjects. The book, then, can be seen as a kind of public journal of sorts, one that she intended as an "experiment," as she called it in the 1976 introduction to the text

(n.p.).

Yet, in the 1987 version of "Is Gender Necessary?", Le

Guin updates the original article with commentary (in italics) which shares her feelings of defensiveness in response to what she felt then was the critics' over-attention to the "gender problems" of the book, and therein modifies her original denial to acknowledge the inextricable nature of sex and gender in relation to other aspects of the text. Further along in the article, Le Guin discusses what she sees as the results of her "experiment": a warless and exploitation-less society lacking sexuality as a constant influencing social factor. Finally, Le Guin addresses the a question of whether LHD is a utopian novel by suggesting most strongly that it is not, for it does not offer what most utopian novels offer: a reasonable, practical alternative to modern society (16).

If the critical analyst accepts unquestioningly Le Guin's suggestion that the work was merely an experiment to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of the writer, there is little ground for discussion of rhetorical technique used in the aims of social criticism. However, the weight of the collected criticism seems to make such a suggestion unacceptable to the discerning critic. And if LHD is not a utopia, as Le Guin promotes, and its aim is not to foment social action, I assert that it is a work which means to incite social thought on the significance and nature of sex roles, alienation, and xenophobia. The manner in which the author engages the reader to participate in this type of

thought is through the construction of a debate which allows
the known and unknown on both sides of the social case to be
explored at the same time the characters interact.[3] The
focus of the next chapter is to examine the narrative con-
structs which act like markers in this debate.

Chapter II: A Balancing Structure of Narrators and Myths

Some critics of The Left Hand of Darkness focus on what
they see as the "broken" nature of the text, specifically
pointing out that problems in the structure and ordering of
information work to disintegrate meaning for the reader and
make the story as a whole less accessible.[4] The flaws sug-
gested by these critics include: too many narrators, non-
chronological narrative flow, and the intrusion of seemingly
unrelated or overly mechanical, deterministic mythic materi-
al. I propose that the supposed disunity in the narrative
structure is the author's use of debate as a textual form. I
further propose that aspects of Burke's concept of dialec-
tic, specifically the mind-body pairing, can be successfully
applied to the structure and related elements to reveal the
tacit threads which bind together these components into a
unified rhetorical instrument of social criticism.

Burke's evolved perspective on dialectic is delineated
in one of his texts, A Grammar of Motives, and in the chap-
ter entitled, "Dialectic in General," he offers three as-
pects of dialectic. Of the "Three Major Pairs" heading, the
mind-body grouping stands out as demonstrated well in LHD.
Burke defines this grouping as having the potential for a
number of treatments. Two of these treatments are the posi-
tioning of the members of a pair "as in opposition," and
using them "as aspects of an underlying reality that is the

ground of both (419). The result of using these paired members, and shifting from one to the other, provides a strong opportunity to make one side of a case more appealing than the other (419). This perspective seems especially applicable in the situation of social criticism.

The purpose of social criticism, whether presented in fiction, film or political tracts, derives from the tension between what exists in a society and what some members of that society conceive of as alternatives to those conditions. The purpose of any social criticism, therefore, can be to change the current conditions or to develop a heightened level of awareness to the pair of elements involved: conditions and alternatives. The tradition of using stories or directed experiences to lead listeners or readers to new levels of awareness is long. Aesop used a specific kind of story, a fable, to impart criticism to his listeners. Jesus used parables to instruct and inspire. Socrates engaged his students in dialectical discourses as a means of instruction. Public oral debate between citizens or between statespersons can function in the same manner. The technique of presenting opposing views on the same issue, adapted also into products of journalism for both newsprint and television audiences, has proved successful in motivating, inspiring and even outraging individuals with sharpened cognizance of social issues. The use of this rhetorical strategy, then, in a piece of fiction should offer the author a power-

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ful means of encouraging readers to focus on and develop
awareness of specific social issues the author has chosen to
address.

This portion of my analysis will examine the two major
elements which form the framework for the narrative struc-
ture, specifically the multiple narrators, and the presence
of mythic stories and folktales, with the consideration that
the aims of dialectic are "to give us representation by use
of mutually related or interacting perspectives" (Burke
403). These perspectives are derived from one mind, that of
the author, and so have the implicit connection of being
intensely and inextricably related, but the text demon-
strates a unity based on a debate format.[5]

The structure of LHD includes chapters which use two
main narrators, and chapters which offer mythic stories from
the culture of the host planet, Gethen. Le Guin has included
ten chapters narrated by Genly Ai, the visiting envoy of the
Ekumen, four chapters narrated by Therem Harth of Estraven,
and six chapters which detail myths and stories of
Estraven's world whose recording was completed by various
narrators of both worlds. When these chapters are separated
into debate "sides," they are balanced with ten for the
Ekumen and ten for the Gethen cultures.

Le Guin's debate can be separated into three sections,
each having a rhetorically powerful pattern of rhythmical
recurrence and juxtaposition in the narrative form. In the

first section, she develops the pattern by alternating Genly Ai's narration with an oral "hearth-tale" and a Karhidish story (Genly-hearthtale-Genly-story-Genly). This pattern is powerful in its effect on the reader for three reasons. One, it establishes Genly Ai as the primus inter pares, the character through whom the reader can relate most fully to the experiences of the book, and who therefore becomes a means of modifying the reader's perceptions; two, it establishes the contrastive sequencing significant to the debate which develops specific expectations in the reader; and three, it introduces the means by which Le Guin gets her readers to make leaps of understanding by bringing more of themselves to the story.

Genly Ai's importance as a rhetorical element in the debate is established by the fact that he is the first narrator, he is the narrator with the most comprehensive view of what is to follow, and he is the individual who has designed the "report" by choosing what has been included. Even though he offers readers in the first three paragraphs the option to believe what they like, as "truth is a matter of the imagination," since the readers have had no contact or experience with the Gethenians, Genly Ai's offer acts as an inducement to an attitude of impartiality, allowing Genly (and implicitly the author) the freedom to shape the reader's attitude freely from that point on. Much like the leaders of ancient oral discourse, Genly's character works

to engage the other participant (the reader) by suggesting

an atmosphere of freedom of thought and belief on the sub-

ject at hand, when through him Le Guin is actually setting

up the presentation of information in such a way that cer-

tain perspectives cannot be avoided.

The juxtaposition of chapters in this section, as in

the next section, is especially powerful in terms of using

the rhetorical technique of contrast to set up the premise

of the debate. This technique is generally understood as

placing in propinquity representatives of two opposing

viewpoints, represented in formal debate by acknowledgement

and refutation. In literature, the representation can be

through characters, cultures, landscapes, institutions,

metaphors and imagery. The results of this placement usually

provide the alert reader with new insights regarding one or

both of the sides because the juxtaposition induces an

evaluative mode of thinking. Burke's concept of the mind-

body pairing as grounded in the same underlying reality is

an evolved form of this contrast technique. The concept of

contrast evokes its counterpart, comparison, and comparison

is the search for similarities based on a common reality.

The latter portion of the first chapter is Genly Ai's

narrative explanation and description of his place among the

Gethenians at that point, at least as he sees it. Le Guin

has him describe the weather and climate of the planet, the

people and their nature, a cultural event (parade and key

stone mortaring), some of the history of the kings of Karhide, and another character called Estraven, whom he distrusts. He expresses his discomfort with the androgynous nature of the people he has been sent to persuade into joining the Ekumen, thereby more clearly setting up the attitude of distrust and a condition of misunderstanding which will color his actions. Additionally, this intro-duction of sex-role stereotyping provides Le Guin with the opportunity to encourage the reader to identify more closely with Genly Ai. His reactions to the concept of an entire civilization of beings in permanent androgyny are much the same as those of many of the readers. Furthermore, Estraven, at the end of the chapter, converses with Genly Ai to with-draw his support for Genly's audience with the king and expresses his understanding of "fear of the other" (19), thereby introducing xenophobia as an issue to the text. Contrasting sharply with this narrative chapter is the next, "The Place Inside the Blizzard."

This oral hearth-tale from the Karhidish archives has an unknown narrator/author, and it depicts a story of love, incest, alienation and suicide, and renewal, all classical aspects of traditional mythic material.[6] The study of this genre offers at least three basic types: myths of origin, of either the world or of humans; myths of alienation, caused by the deceptions of the "trickster" (much like the serpent of Eden in Judeo-Christian beliefs), or by unacceptable

sexual behavior; and eschatological, which deal with human destiny on either a millenarian or cyclical basis (Schmidt 184-193). In "The Place Inside the Blizzard," Le Guin has elected to use a myth which has classical appeal in the sense that it is a representation of oral tradition (the most ancient and archetypal); it depicts the original state of love between two people destroyed by the conflict of personal desire with cultural restrictions.

Le Guin increases the complexity and the appeal of the story by including motifs of physical exile, and layering in the concept of the "scapegoat." This motif often includes a number of basic progressing elements. First, one member of a society transgresses against an established social norm. Then the protesting transgressor is ostracized with much reviling by the social group. This "sinner" or criminal eventually accepts responsibility for the sin or crime, and then dies in some manner. It is only after the transgressor's death that renewal of the community from which s/he evolved can occur. In some myth formats, the renewal is literal; the social group is miraculously revived from the state of death. In other myth formats, the renewal is through the revival of the environment: the return of flora and fauna. In still others, the renewal is metaphorical and based on the reestablishing of cohesive social relationships, relationships threatened by the actions and consequences of the transgressor. This scapegoat motif which is

part of many cultures and religious belief systems, systems to which many readers belong or have strong associations, works to draw the readers further into the mythic framework that the author has created.

The complexity which Le Guin introduces to this chapter alters in another way the perspective held by the reader. By offering foreshadowing of the personal love experience of Estraven in a mythic milieu, Le Guin allows the reader to be introduced to the social norms and consequences associated with Estraven's culture before the reader comes to know of his transgression. The reader is prepared psychologically for viewing Estraven's love and bonding and subsequent loss with much less xenophobic resistance than if it were placed earlier in the story. The foreshadowing also prepares the reader for Estraven's choice to sacrifice himself at the border, a choice closely in line with the mythic variations already mentioned.

The placement of the second chapter also works for the author by evoking from the reader associations that can only come from listening to or reading an account of a narrative which offers a look at taboo or ordinarily unexplainable subjects. Mythic material, by definition, is expected to explain some practice, belief, tradition, institution or natural phenomenon present in a culture. It does this by first telling a narrative which the reader can follow and accept only if this reader suspends disbelief even in the

face of contradictions present in the tale. This suspension
of disbelief then allows the reader to release and put aside
logical expectation, while permitting mystical, spiritual,
non-logical leaps of understanding to fill whatever voids
may exist (Schmidt 195). Le Guin uses this reaction to move
her readers to make the leaps of understanding required to
know the Gethenian culture, therefore helping them to gain
understanding of the non-logical, low-technological side of
her debate.

The following chapters in this section repeat the
pattern set by the first: Genly (Chapter 3) and a mythic
story (Chapter 4) alternate. In Chapter 3, Genly meets with
the king after learning of Estraven's disgrace and exile,
and the meeting is a "failure" (40). Through this, Le Guin
has intensified the reader's knowledge of Genly Ai's senti-
ments and intentions on the planet. He becomes witness to
the disgrace of Estraven, and feels alienated from the
authority best able to help him succeed in his mission. He
then makes a decision to leave that city and seek informa-
tion from the supernaturally endowed "Foretellers" (42).

Le Guin uses the next chapter, entitled "The Nineteenth
Day," to continue the pattern begun with the myth in the
second chapter. In the sequence of the narrative, the
fourth chapter works further to develop the non-logical
appeal associated with the part of the debate which is
opposite that represented by Genly Ai. The Karhidish custom

of seeking help from the Foretellers, and the disastrous
results of asking the "wrong question," encourages readers
to identify with the needs of the two characters, Berosty
and Herbor, both of whom die miserably as a result of chal-
lenging the natural boundaries between life and death. The
story does not offer concrete, explicit description of the
systems which allow this storyline to develop. The reader is
engaged to participate in the experience of Berosty and
Herbor, and then to extrapolate from that experience (much
as Genly Ai must) what laws and systems are at work. In
this way, Le Guin pulls the reader into the debate much as
an attorney engages the participation of jury members by
offering them a story which relates to his purpose, builds
the atmosphere of his case, and reaches them by touching on
their personal mythic constructs.

The last chapter in this section is narrated by Genly
Ai. "The Domestication of Hunch" details Genly's travels to
the Fastnesses at the edge of Karhide, a place where the
Foretellers abide to exhibit "the perfect uselessness of
knowing the answer to the wrong question" (70). Le Guin has
this chapter reflect some of the aspects of the previous in
terms of foretelling and asking questions, but with the
added sense of Genly's logical, critical approach to the
supernatural offerings of these "Answerers" (70). Genly is
the last narrator in this section, ending it with an im-
proved sense of who the Gethenians are just as Le Guin's

readers must. Genly's narrative begins and ends this section just as the first presenter in a debate offers one side, one view of the opposition's side, and one stance on the issue at hand.

The second section of the debate in the text increases the complexity by altering the pattern of the Genly-myth rhythm to include narration by Estraven. The introduction of a specific "alien" character, whose mind and emotions the reader may observe and explore, functions both to present the non-Genly side of the debate and to make more concrete the Gethenian views and social systems the readers may have extrapolated from the mythic material presented in the first section.

This section is twelve chapters long, and can be further broken down into four groupings or rounds, all of which include one chapter each of narration by Genly, one by Estraven, and one mythic entry. The development of the section offers increased awareness of the issues through the experiences of the characters, heightened and surpassed with successive groupings. As a detailed discussion of each of these individual chapters would be too extensive for the purposes of this thesis, I will examine the second section by treating each grouping of chapters on the basis of how it contributes to the overall debate structure.

The first grouping includes "One Way into Orgoreyn," "The Question of Sex," and "Another way into Orgoreyn," and

is set up pivotally with Estraven's experience coming before

the mythic chapter, and Genly's coming after. Estraven is

awakened by a servant with an order for his exile and makes

his way on foot to the border of Orgoreyn, sustains injuries

at the hands of the border guard, awakes in a hospital to

the interrogation of an Inspector, gains and loses and gains

again proper documentation to work in Mishnory, and at last

meets with assistants to the ruler of Orgoreyn, who tell him

that Genly has applied for permission to speak with their

king as well.

The Estraven chapter offers a contrast to the Genly-

generated views of the atmosphere and issues of the

Gethenians. Le Guin uses Estraven to reveal that despite the

uniform condition of androgyny, all Gethenians are not

uniform in their beliefs or ethics. The issues presented in

an "abstract" way in the mythic chapters in the previous

section, such as alienation, become more real as the reader

participates in Estraven's walk into exile. Yet, the next

chapter plunges the reader back into the mythic, non-logical

mood and discusses, through the field notes of an inves-

tigator from the first landing party on Gethen, theories of

how and why the Gethenians are androgynous while giving

specific physiological details to their condition. His

discussion comes in the form of a report, yet most of what

he discusses is theory and conjecture, the logical world's

equivalent of myth. Le Guin uses the considerations of the

author of this report to introduce sub-issues of sex-role

stereotyping, such as rape, psycho-sexual associations, and

the dualism usually assigned to male-female societies, in

terms of their absence on Gethen.

The last chapter in this grouping is narrated by Genly,

and details his reactions to the investigative summer he

spends traveling around the country of Karhide, contrasting

what he finds with what he knows of his own culture. He is

drawn to the land of Orgoreyn, into intrigue and confine-

ment, and finally he meets with Estraven at the table of an

official there.

This first grouping is significant in the debate for

two reasons; it presents, initially, a representative char-

acter for the other side of the debate which has been devel-

oped only by mythic inference in the first section, and it

very specifically considers issues from that debate in a

manner which does not affect the movement of the narrative,

but works to place in the mind of the reader a continuing

resonance of those issues, with which all subsequent infor-

mation can be compared.

Contrasting with the previous grouping, the second

triad of chapters begins with a strong piece of mythic

material entitled, "Estraven the Traitor," which was record-

ed by Genly Ai as a well-known, multi-versioned East Karhide

tale. Le Guin details in this chapter the blood feud between

families which is resolved only after much pain and loss. In

"Conversations in Mishnory," Genly narrates his brief con-
frontation with Estraven, who warns him of betrayal, and his
presentation of facts about the Ekumen to the doubting
Obsle, an official of Orgoreyn. "Soliloquies in Mishnory" is
Estraven's eight day journal account of his interactions
with and observations of the committee dealing with Genly
and his proposition. Together, these chapters encourage the
reader to make the move to the next level of understanding
demanded by the continuation of the debate.

That next level is found in the third grouping, also
begun with a mythic chapter, one of a brief three pages. "On
Time and Darkness" is described as an excerpt from "the
sayings of Tuhulme the High Priest...composed about 900
years ago" (162). This is an exceptionally abstract chapter
dealing with the Gethen concept of time, with two paragraphs
devoted to a brief parable as an example. It could be con-
sidered the most "disruptive" to the narrative flow by those
critics who seek traditional chronological progression
because the chapter seems unrelated to the storyline. Le
Guin offers here a chapter which can do two things with the
reader: induce the reader to reflect back on the third
paragraph of Chapter One, where Genly says "It is always
year One here," (2) and prepare through the tone and content
of the chapter the reader's understanding of the dual nature
inherent in the Gethenian's experiences.

A version of this dual nature is harshly presented to

Genly in his experiences in Chapter Thirteen, "Down on the Farm." In Chapter Eight, he looks forward to the "light, clean" appearance of Orgoreyn, noting that "this now looked like a country ready to enter the Ekumenical Age" (115). His presumptive association of lightness and cleanliness with civilization and opportunity is destroyed when he is arrested, stripped, imprisoned, and witnesses the drugging of prisoners to prevent sexual activity. Le Guin allows the reader to see Genly's presuppositions about the Gethenian culture erode; as the reader has identified most heavily with Genly throughout the novel, the reader then is encouraged to see the less civilized aspects of a culture previously described as lacking rape, war, and other problems so inextricably associated with the male-female dualism in the reader's society. Perhaps the most significant element of this grouping occurs in this chapter; Estraven requests that Genly teach him "mindspeech," a skill widely practiced in the Ekumen. Mindspeech, according to Genly, precludes lying, and Le Guin's inclusion of the request for this sharing portends significant changes in the positions of the members of the debate.

The final grouping in this section works as the plateau of understanding in the debate before Le Guin presses on to the culminating section. In this grouping, Genly is the first narrator, and he describes from a position of dependency on Estraven how they decide to become a team to travel

back to Karhide the long way over the ice. Significant here is Le Guin's choice of Estraven and Genly deciding to call each other not by intimate hearth-brother names, but by everyday citizen names, indicating that a distance exists between them untouched by their united need to return to Karhide.

This distance is at once underscored and eroded by the next chapter narrated by Estraven in fourteen journal entries. Here Le Guin has juxtaposed the reality of Genly's "exile," his loss of family and friends due to the time differential in his mode of travel, against the exile that Estraven has suffered. The reader is encouraged to see similarities in their individual conditions of exile, yet Le Guin further focuses the issue of alienation in terms of the sociosexual ramifications which differentiate the androgynes' lives from human experiences as Estraven and Genly discuss the nature of male-female roles.

The final chapter in this grouping and this section is a powerful, archetypal rendering called "An Orgota Creation Myth." This story depicts the creation of Gethenians from the soil and seawater, and the propagation of the race in a house of corpses from the coupling of two brothers. The story includes classical aspects of fear of the other, betrayal, murder, uncontrollable desire and the curse of "darkness" following the descendants of these two brothers (239). Le Guin uses this chapter to touch on the associa-

tions her readers have with sin and with loss of innocence, and to prepare them for the resolution phase of the debate.

This grouping is pivotal in Le Guin's movement toward the final section of this debate because it brings the issues of alienation and sex-role stereotyping into intimate discussion before the reader through the interactions of the two representatives of the debate sides, Genly and Estraven. As those two characters interact solely with one another in an isolated, harsh, and hostile environment, the boundaries of Genly's side of the debate become less clear as his need to categorize Estraven as either male or female dissolves.

The final section of the debate has only three chapters, and together they work as a summary for the debate which has been encouraging readers to move from the author's introduction of the issues to increasingly more intimate knowledge of how those issues affect the participants of each side. Genly Ai is the only narrator for this section, which is a significant change from the previous seventeen chapters and might indicate that his side had "won," as it has prevailed over the "voices" of the other side. However, I would like to propose that Le Guin's choice of using only Genly to complete the story suits three purposes. One, it is Genly's report, a report which would have had a much different focus had Estraven been the primary and final narrator; two, the final chapter presents an ending which offers a cyclical-type caesura to the story when Genly is asked to

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tell the story of his world and his experiences with Estra-ven to Estraven's child. The reader is encouraged then to consider the story and its issues again, and how it would be told to the child. Finally, Genly's growth and the treatment of the issues is culminated in Genly's experiences in the last three chapters.

The movement of the story reveals that Genly came to Gethen perceiving himself as experienced and open, yet discovered that he had significant problems with the reality of androgyny, with alienation, and with his attitudes to-wards sex roles in his own society. His character, as a representation of the side of the debate populated with similar humans, the readers, required the most rumination on these issues. His was the mind in the text which most needed awareness heightening, and he is the character who must, like the reader, carry the responsibility of what to do with the new knowledge -- the heightened awareness -- after the debate has ceased.

Le Guin offers the reader this section, then, not as a final resolution to the debate, with issues simplistically settled one way or the other. Instead, the resolution to the debate must be found in the altered awareness of the charac-ter and the reader. Genly chooses to seek exoneration for Estraven from treason, which is not granted; but he express-es hope for improved changes at the sight of more envoys from his world. As a result of his experiences, these

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fellow-humans seem to him more alien than the beings of Gethen, a far different attitude than expressed in the first chapter. His changed awareness is demonstrated in his choices to seek out Estraven's family and share himself with them. The readers, silent participants in this debate, are encouraged by Genly's example to integrate or synthesize views on alienation, sex-role stereotyping, and xenophobia which may be opposite or different from their own.

Chapter III: The Other Players: Metaphors & Images

Assisting readers in choosing to integrate or synthe-
size the new awareness they may gain through experiencing
the text are some literary and rhetorical devices which
substantially support the narrative structure of the text
and echo the debate Le Guin has created. Although the text
offers numerous choices for development here, three major
metaphors and one central image seem to work best in support
of that structure. The travel-quest motif, the low-tech
nature of the Gethenian culture, and Le Guin's choice of
androgyny work together with her use of light-dark imagery
to provide the reader with reflections of the movement from
minimal awareness to heightened understanding inherent in
the debate process.

The travel-quest motif is an ancient and broadly used
component in oral and written literature. Examples of this
motif can be found in the Allegory of the Cave by Plato, in
The Odyssey by Homer, in the search for the Holy Grail in
the Arthurian legends, and in modern form in Joseph Conrad's
Heart of Darkness. The most basic requirement of this motif
is that a character participate in a journey. The variations
on this are many; the journey can start from a home site or
from some distance away towards the home site; the traveler
can be sent by others or leave from inner promptings, and go
willingly or unwillingly. Whatever the variation, the

traveler begins with one purpose and then usually develops a
desire to attain something else as a result of experiences
during the journey. Many times, the significant personal
aspects of the quest develop only after the character begins
to deal with the challenging details of the journey.

In LHD, Genly Ai begins his journey from the regions of
the Ekumen, his home site, and travels to Gethen as an envoy
to encourage the planet's inhabitants to join the associa-
tion of planets he represents.[7] Virtually nothing of the
actual space "trip" is discussed in the text; the reader is
informed, late in the book, that the trip has taken Genly a
short time, but during that relatively brief period, more
than fifty years had passed on his home planet. As a result,
he is without family and without friends there. The focus of
Le Guin's variation on this motif, therefore, falls on
Genly's travel from the place of Karhide, where the book
begins, to Orgoreyn, and back to Karhide.

Genly's understanding of the Karhide culture in the
beginning of the book is limited. For most of the first
chapter, he is concerned with the weather and the oddities
presented to him by the parade he observes. The roots of the
significant travel-quest motif are begun when Genly's poten-
tial access to an audience with the king is cut off.
Estraven, his patron, withdraws his support for the audi-
ence, leaving many questions about the situation unanswered
in Genly's mind. The third chapter finds Genly in audience

with the king, but only after Estraven's order of exile has been announced. Genly finds the king, considered mad by Estraven, both xenophobic and unreceptive to his ideas. The puzzle of what went wrong, both with Estraven and with his meeting with the king, drives Genly out on his journey.

Le Guin makes the meeting and subsequent travel significant by letting the reader understand that Genly had developed his knowledge of the Gethenians through documents provided by the previous visitors, the Ekumen Investigators. His knowledge, for the most part, appeared to be second-hand. Yet, on the last page of Chapter Three, Genly asserts that "for two years I had been answering questions, now I would ask some" (42). His motivation for the trip is to understand what had not made itself apparent during his two-year stay in Karhide. The beginning of his increased awareness is the sudden understanding that he needs to know more. The quality of his questions, however, comes under scrutiny after his visit to the Foretellers, where they reveal to him the purpose of their collective lifestyle: "to exhibit the perfect uselessness of knowing the answer to the wrong question" (70). Genly is now faced with a situation typical of many variations of the travel/quest motif. He is impelled to "find" what he seeks -- good diplomatic relations between the government of Gethen and the Ekumen. Yet, to do so, he must first decipher the value of the people he encounters and the knowledge he gains along the way. He must choose

which person and which knowledge will help him the most. The
nature of this challenge duplicates that found in any debate
situation; while the course of the debate brings the partic-
ipants from one minimal level of awareness to an increased
level, it is up to the participants to select which grouping
of information to use in making decisions, either to promote
further awareness or to make practical changes in their
attitudes and actions.

Le Guin has chosen to set the debate mode of this novel
within a much filtered landscape. She offers an environment
which might seem hellish to the average reader accustomed to
seasonal variances in temperature and weather; her planet is
nicknamed "Winter" in the text and provides the elements
associated with the physical winter known by readers. Con-
sistently low temperatures, a scarcity of animal life, and
the absence of insect life all combine to delineate the
spare background to the story.[8]

However, what seems to be more significant in relation
to the debate is the absence of native advanced technology.
The author has elected to set the super-advanced technology
of Genly Ai's culture against the minimally technological
culture of Estraven and the other Gethenians. The same
technology which allows Genly to seek the union of Gethen
with Ekumen also isolates him as an individual from what
most individuals hold dear, friends and family. The minimal
technology on Gethen does not separate individuals,

nor does its absence; the relationship-based issues of love, loyalty, desire and fear work to provide their own divisive problems. The ability to understand and to be purveyors of high technology has been generalized in previous decades as part of male psychology; on the other hand, women have been traditionally described as non-technologically oriented, tending instead to focus on forming and maintaining relationships. The comparative lack of technology built into the landscape of the Gethen culture would underscore the side of the debate opposite the traditional views held by Genly and the readers who associate with him.

Few readers, however, would initially associate easily with the metaphor of androgyny used in the text. The subject of much critical discussion, it offers a double support for the debate mode. This metaphor works to exemplify two points about the debate itself. As male and female potential are contained within one being, male and female sides to the issues are contained within each side of the debate in the text. The unpredictable nature of the appearance of the manifestation of either male or female in the androgyne reflects the blurred sex-role boundaries which exist potentially in all humans, unclear boundaries which exist even in the sides of the debate.

One other aspect of the androgyny which seems to underscore the social criticism Le Guin implies throughout the text through the debate mode is the reference to Gethenians

in induced prolonged "kemmer" (when sexually distinct, either male or female) as "halfdeads" (64). The concept of permanently male or female entities is revolting to most natives to the planet, and the idea that a being would voluntarily choose to stay only one sex is considered per- version. Implied in the metaphor of androgyny is the concept of unity and balance, demonstrated by two functioning sexual entities potentially within one organism. The term "halfdeads" implies a loss of that balance, of that unity, of the potential inherent in being able to draw on the qualities and abilities of either sex. The implication of this term as applied to humans is that those who deny in themselves the traditionally assigned qualities of the other sex lose much; they are "dead" to that part of themselves and see only the alien differences in members of the other sex. The metaphor of androgyny, as it is initially viewed by Genly Ai until his transcendence of its alienness, works well to both embody the nature of the debate and assist in reflecting the developing awareness in Genly Ai and the reader.

The reader is not only assisted in participating in the debate by the discussed metaphors, but also by a number of repeated light/dark images which contribute to the unity of the text.[9] Le Guin has provided an image grouping which appeals to the reader's most basic associations. From the first page, she includes references to things light and

dark. Genly's analogy of the "singular organic jewel of our seas, which grows brighter...and...dulls," depending on who wears it, is the first textual mention of light/dark imagery.

Le Guin continues in the first section of the debate to have Genly associate positive things with the light. He responds to Estraven's authority "as surely as [he would] to the warmth of the sun (7), an orb known for its life-giving light. Even though the unexpected appearance of sunlight during the parade causes him some discomfort in the heavy clothes he wears, Genly reflects on how much that sunlight might mean to him later on. The "dark towers" (2) of Karhide offer too much "color, choler and passion" (114); so when he leaves for Orgoreyn, he associates those things with a "dark age." The realm of Orgoreyn, particularly the city of Mishnory, reveals his associations of light with fastidious-ness and opportunity: "There was no clutter and contortion, no sense of being under the shadow of something high and gloomy...everything was simple, grandly conceived, and orderly..."(115).

Le Guin carefully has the dark hold uncomfortable experiences for Genly; he is unused to what appears to him as the alogical intrigue presented to him by Estraven and other members of the court, and most of the discomfiting conversations of that nature that he has are held at night. But his unease at dealing with the psychological and emo-

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tional contact he experiences in the dark decreases as the debate continues. As a balance in the debate, Le Guin then has light take on new meanings for Genly when he is incarcerated in the prison in Mishnory, where the interrogation room is "brightly lit" (166), and again in the labor camp, where Genly comes to associate unremitting domination with an "excess of light" (174). His discomfort with things associated with dark begins to change when he is rescued from the camp by Estraven, a native of the dark and choleric Karhide. He is in the state of "dothe," a physical condition described as "strength out of the Dark" (189). Le Guin makes the clear association of dark with positive here by having nurturing, life-saving things come from it or one of its representatives: strength, rescue, caring, and succor.

The light-dark image grouping continues through the entire text, culminating in the section of the book which details the crossing of the large ice floe by the two characters. Outside is so much light and reflected light that they frequently could not distinguish a safe way among the hills and crevasses. Inside their tent, it is warm and dark, and the two characters share an intimate interdependence on one another for survival. The intensity and significance of their sharing reaches its highest point when Genly "bespeaks" Estraven; he uses the mindspeech of his people to call out the friendship name of Estraven, Therem.

Genly, as he develops his awareness, participates in a

repeating image association of light and dark that as it progresses indicates both light and dark as necessary and both as offering positive qualities. In the Mishnory-labor camp environment, unremitting light and the denial of darkness is an extreme found to be unhealthy and debilitating, just as the condition of the "halfdeads" is viewed.

Perhaps the most striking use of light-dark associations comes in "Tormer's Lay," from which the title of the book is taken:

> Light is the left hand of darkness
>
> and darkness is the left hand of light.
>
> Two are one, life and death, lying
>
> together like lovers in kemmer,
>
> like hands joined together,
>
> like the end and the way (234).

In this, Le Guin has made the association of light and dark as parts of the same entity; this joining is rhetorically powerful because it does not allow for the complete separation, and therefore rejection, of one part from the other. She encourages readers to look at the light and dark in contrast, using life and death as the first and strongest pair; without life, no death could exist, and without death (playing again on the sacrifice motif), life would have much less meaning. Each condition contributes to the meaning of the other, just as the shadow on the Gobrin Ice allowed for the use of the light. This sentiment is continued in the

portion of the lay which says, "like lovers in kemmer," for the androgynous lovers become sexually distinct in response to each other. One becomes male in reaction to the other becoming female; the distinguishing qualities of each appear only in the contrast allowed by proximity.[10]

Light and dark, and all that they have implied through the text, are not alienated or isolated from each other. The unity which Genly did not recognize or feel at the beginning of the text becomes more apparent to him and to the reader as the debate moves him progressively towards greater awareness. Le Guin's repeated use of this light-dark association helps to form the tension characteristic of debate, and works as encouragement to the readers to see both sides of the issues of alienation, xenophobia, and sex-role stereotyping.

Chapter IV: Evaluation

   The debate strategy proposed in this thesis is based on

the intense interplay of structural elements, metaphors, and

images which the author has combined in the effort to make

social criticism about the issues of alienation, sex-role

stereotyping and xenophobia. The evaluation of how well

these elements demonstrate or give evidence of this debate

must be based on their resonance of this continued movement

from minimal to heightened awareness.

   Light-dark imagery was detailed in the previous chapter

as being arranged by the author to reflect changes in Genly

Ai's consciousness. The changes for him were discomposing.

He began with a dislike for what he had associated with

dark, the Karhide emotionalism. Only imprisonment and pain-

ful sessions with the purveyors of unremitting light brought

him to make more reasonable associations. But these initial

changes were elementary preparation for the more intense,

more personal developments reflected by the dark-light

interchanges experienced during his flight across the ice

with Estraven. Near the end, light became all-consuming and

life-threatening; dark (shadow) became the balancing force,

the element which permitted movement forward literally

across the ice (267), and metaphorically with the help of

Estraven. The times spent inside the tent, in the darkness

of night or the dimness of twilight, presented a haven-like

refuge from the light. It is an ironic curve in the upward spiral of Genly's awareness that makes the dark begin to harbor him, offering relative safety and time for physical and emotional restoration.

The dark/light associations Genly considers after the days of "unshadow" and isolated intimacy with Estraven are challenged when Estraven is betrayed to the authorities. Le Guin makes the road before them "streaked with dark and bright" (281), reflecting the debate and its movement using the associations developed with dark and light. Heading towards the border, the dark is what protects them; a brief flash of light in the dark countryside allows Estraven's death. Le Guin maintains well this interplay of light and dark. The association of dark with passion, chaos and alogical intrigue is developed to encompass the concepts of nurturing strength, refuge and protection; light, which initially was associated with order, reason, and progress, is developed conversely in the course of the text to encompass insensitivity, absence of passion, and rigid control. The associations are made through the experiences of Genly Ai, Estraven, and through the content of the myths Le Guin presents. The images she offers contribute to the overall debate movement without overwhelming other aspects of the text. They are, like the issues she presents, at once singularly recognizable yet part of a larger context.

The three metaphors mentioned in the previous chapter,

the travel-quest motif, the use of a low-technology culture,
and the use of androgyny, have all been explained in their
relationship to the debate. Kenneth Burke provides criteria
for evaluating the effectiveness of this strategy. He has
indicated that drama is individuals in action. He also has
suggested that the writer who wishes to create a good drama
must create a plot and mythic structure to reflect the
tension between these individuals. The artist must personify
that tension in separate but interdependent characters, or
by "dramatic dissociation into interrelated roles"
("Othello" 166). Even though the tension of a work may exist
about one issue or one act committed, the characters must
exemplify various aspects of that tension. Like facets of
one gem, each character shows one slant on the issue or act,
but together they work to create a whole which draws more
light into the work. When evaluating how well these ele-
ments demonstrate the debate mode, the critic could evaluate
them as if they were personalities who demonstrate some
emotional texture related to the issue or that contribute to
the dialectical tension.

In LHD, only two developed characters, Genly Ai and
Estraven, offer the reader depth and complexity; the rest of
the characters are incompletely developed, and are "flat."
This paucity of round human characters to support the debate
movement could have damaged the effectiveness of the text
had Le Guin not used the metaphors and image groupings so

adroitly.

The travel-quest motif, as one means of giving evidence of the debate, provides the reader with the tensions associated with being away from home and trying to function in an alien (alien defined as anything unfamiliar to the traveler) environment. Basic to this situation are the concerns of losing one's place in the home community because of a prolonged absence, "fitting into" the new community, losing the psychological and emotional identity associated with home, and physically struggling to survive the actual trip. If the essence of this motif were to be characterized, it is a character of worry and fear and competition. In view of the issues Le Guin explores in the text, this motif provides the underlying emotions of anxiety and estrangement associated with xenophobia and alienation.

High technology can be characterized as a left-brain, un-emotional, progress-oriented sort of personality; however, Le Guin chooses to use only the hint of high technology, the time jump and the ansible, in establishing the culture from which Genly traveled. Use of more of this type of technology would obscure the landscape of the simpler Gethenian technology and make the debate imbalanced, as well as change the focus away from relationship issues to those which might spring from the use, care and sharing of items from that more "advanced" technology. Gethenian culture had a characteristically opposite and pervasive lack of high

technology, supporting the right-brain, emotive, stasis-oriented side of the debate. The tension is supported here by a "metaphor of absence," which provides an opposite pole to Genly's culture.

Most metaphors suggesting an absence of something concrete imply that this represents a lack of a useful or positive abstract quality, e.g. loss or absence of eyesight for lack of the ability to discern. This metaphor offers the readers perhaps the largest measure of irony as well. In Le Guin's work, the expectation for this type of metaphor is reversed, for the absence of high technology (a presence usually seen as representing power and "progress," among other things) creates unusual pressure on the expectations of the readers. Examples of this are that the inhabitants of Gethen have little advanced technology, do not seek to develop advanced technology, and have a calendar which begins at "Year One" every year; and yet their culture has a lack of war, rape, and violence, things associated regularly with "primitive" cultures. Genly descends to Gethen from a culture filled with the products of advanced technology, yet he has primitive skills for effectively dealing with the natives; he is, more specifically, "powerless," making no progress for the first two years of his stay, and only making gains in establishing diplomatic relations through his personal relationships. Le Guin has the reader see the absence of technology as potentially negative through

Genly's perceptions at the beginning of the text, yet it is

through the simpler technology (sled, tent, travel by foot)

and its emphasis on interdependent relationships that Genly

learns how to become "powerful" and finally makes diplomatic

progress. The original perspective on "lack," and all its

negative associations, is transformed into an opposite

perspective of welcomed opportunity to unify with others.

Two opposites are encompassed in the metaphor of an-

drogyny, the male and female essences with all their atten-

dant qualities. Those who see the male and female animal of

any race as separate and distinct in every way possible

might characterize androgyny as schizophrenic. However,

Le Guin encourages the reader to see the physical joining of

the two sexes into one being as a prosopopoeia, a metaphor

for the unity of mind, emotions and need that exists in

individuals as human beings beyond the boundaries of gender.

Discerning readers would then see the character of this

metaphor as one of flexibility, composure and confidence.

The elements mentioned herein, light/dark image group-

ings, irony, and the travel/quest, low technology, and

androgyny metaphors, all work together within the structure

Le Guin has created. However, one other component contri-

butes to the debate. Closure is an interesting aspect of a

narrative, for it is the element which offers readers that

sense of the story reaching an end. A story which ends

without it disappoints readers and leaves them unhappily to

make their own kind of closure. Le Guin, however, offers the
reader not one, but two points of closure in her debate.[11]

Essentially, one point of closure is found in Chapter
Eighteen, when Genly Ai accepts Estraven as "a man who was a
woman, a woman who was a man" (248). It is there that his
awareness of the meaning of friendship and of the irrelevan-
cy of gender in friendship comes to its highest point. He
recognizes his own previous unwillingness to reciprocate the
trust, loyalty and acceptance Estraven had extended, and
moves beyond that to accept the differences between them and
to name the bond that had grown as "love" (248). It is this
love and his heightened awareness which motivates Genly to
take action in the final chapter, thereby creating the
second point of closure.

Genly chooses to forego lengthy contact with his compa-
triots, the humans who arrived by spaceship in Karhide, in
order to travel to Estraven's home. Out of love and acting
with heightened understanding of the common humanity of both
humans and androgynes, Genly shares both Estraven's journals
and his story with the father and son who meet him. The
sense of closure here evolves from two aspects. Estraven The
Traitor, in the form of his journals, has been brought home
to his family and in spirit is no longer in exile. Also,
Genly chooses to establish contact with Estraven's family
even though his goal -- establishing a diplomatic relation-
ship between the Ekumen and Gethen -- has been achieved. The

importance of friendship and of love, part of his new aware-
ness, has moved him to seek the kind of close relationships
he was incapable of having at the beginning of the story.
The closure, then, supports the debate by offering readers a
sense of the heightened awareness developed by the alternat-
ing perspectives on the issues of alienation, sex-role
stereotyping, and xenophobia, as well as a model of action
for readers to consider.

Debate, in various forms and appearances, has long been
a part of human communication. Its very longevity as a means
of fomenting thought or action in its participants says
something for its potential effectiveness. In the case of
LHD, the author's use of debate can be seen as a significant
contributor to the novel's success in motivating readers to
consider the personal and societal ramifications of alien-
ation, xenophobia and sex-role stereotyping.

[1]The Hugo Award, established in 1953 and based in Cambridge, MA, is presented by the World Science Fiction Society to recognize outstanding achievement in fantasy and science fiction writing of all kinds. The Nebula Award, established in 1966 and based in Spartanburg, South Carolina, recognizes excellence in the field of science fiction writing in a novel, novella, novellette, or short story and is voted on by professional, published members of the field.

[2]For suggested flaws in Le Guin's use of androgyny, see Pamela J. Annas, "New Worlds, New Words: Androgyny in Feminist Science Fiction." Science Fiction Studies 5 (1978): 143-155. For a historical perspective of androgyny, and for the relationship of androgyny to the Tao in the text, see N.B. Hayles "Androgyny, Ambivalence and Assimilation in The Left Hand of Darkness." in Ursula Le Guin. Ed. Joseph D. Olander and Martin H. Greenberg. New York: Taplinger, 1979: 97-115. For a discussion which traces the roots of androgyny from ancient philosophy and religious beliefs to examples in modern western literature, and examines aspects of imagery in relation to androgyny, see Barbara Brown, "The Left Hand of Darkness: Androgyny, Future, Present, and Past." in Ursula K. Le Guin. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1986: 225-234.

[3]The bildungsroman effect of the text is mentioned by Martin Bickman, "The Left Hand of Darkness: Form and Content" (p.42), and by Charlotte Spivak, Ursula K. Le Guin. [Chapter 4] Boston: Twayne, 1984.

[4]For suggested flaws in the unity of the text, see David Ketterer, New Worlds for Old: The Apocalyptic Imagination, Science Fiction and American Literature. Garden City, New York: Anchor, 1974: 76-90. For a very brief look at overall flaws, see the book review in Publisher's Weekly January 27, 1969: 20.

[5]For a discussion of how form and content in LHD can be united in a useful, coherent, and artistically pleasing manner with reference to thesis-antithesis-synthesis movement, see Martin Bickman, "Le Guin's The Left Hand of Darkness: Form and Content." Science Fiction Studies 4 (1) March 1977: 42-47.

[6]For an interpretation of Le Guin's use of myths according to theories by Claude Lévi-Strauss, and a discussion of how these myths reflect social ideals, see Jeanne Murray Walker, "Myth, Exchange and History in The Left Hand of Darkness." Science Fiction Studies 6 (2) July 1979: 180-189.

[7]For David Ketterer's discussion of myth and the journey, see "Ursula K. Le Guin's Archetypal Winter Journey." in Ursula K. Le Guin. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1986: 11-21.

[8]For a lengthy discussion of the sparse background in the story, see Frederic Jameson, "World Reduction in Le Guin: The Emergence of a Utopian Narrative." Science Fiction Studies 2 (3) November 1973: 221-230.

[9]For an interesting discussion of light/dark imagery aligned with substance and temperature components viewed through William Blake's philosophy of contraries, see David J. Lake, "Le Guin's Two-fold Vision: Contrary Image Sets in The Left Hand of Darkness." Science Fiction Studies 8 (1981): 156-163. For a critique of the unity of light/dark imagery, see Douglas Barbour, "Wholeness and Balance in the Hainish Novels of Ursula K. Le Guin." Science Fiction Studies 1 (3) Spring 1974: 164-172.

[10]"Tormer's Lay" is part of Bickman's study in "Le Guin's The Left Hand of Darkness: Form and Content." Science Fiction Studies 4 (1) March 1977: 42-47. Discussion of the lay appears also in Ketterer, "Winter Journey," 14f, and in Barbour, "Wholeness and Balance," 169.

[11]For concepts of closure related to all of Le Guin's works, see Rafail Nudelman, "An Approach to the Structure of Le Guin's SF." Trans. by Alan G. Myers. Science Fiction Studies 2 (November 1975): 210-220. For closure related to utopian aspects in LHD, see Peter Fitting, "Position and Closure: On the Reading Effect of Contemporary Utopian Fiction." Caliban 22 (1985): 43-55.

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