Université de Montréal

Dancing on the Edge of the Word: Ursula K. Le Guin and Metaphor

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Summary:

This project is a discussion of the way in which the science fiction of Ursula K. Le Guin highlights the role of consent in metaphor, an act that decenters the experiential relationship with the world as source of metaphorical interactions, and highlights the role of metaphor in accessing the unmeasurable, and the unknown. A combination of Le Guin's complex system of metaphor and Paul Ricoeur's work in both metaphor and the composition of acts of will delineates the structures and resultant uses of metaphor both in literature and the world. Within the structures outlined in this work, metaphor falls into four categories determined by where, when, and by whom consent is offered: living metaphor, metaphorized words, effaced metaphor, and determinative metaphor. These structures indicate the uses and misuses of metaphor within social and political dynamics, as well as offering an illustration of how metaphor allows for the expansion into the unknown.

The following text is constructed in four chapters, each of which address four different interactions using four of Le Guin's science fiction novels and one of her novellas. The chapters and subjects are as follows: the unknown in *The Left Hand of Darkness*; governance in *The Dispossessed*; the Other in *The Eye of the Heron*, "A Woman's Liberation," and *The Left Hand of Darkness*; creation in *The Telling*. Le Guin's relationship with respectful interaction places the author in a position that allows for a clear conception of how consent is productive in metaphor through each of four styles of metaphor – living, metaphorized word, effaced, and determinative – interactions with those varieties of consent: informed, historical, borrowed, or

manufactured. As well, Le Guin's work follows through to suggest the results of the use of each of the different styles of metaphor in either an expansion of the world of the recipient or the repression of referent of the metaphor.

Key words: metaphor, consent, effaced, determinative, Ursula K. Le Guin, Paul Ricoeur, science fiction, unknown, immeasurable

Résumé :

Ce projet est une discussion sur la façon selon laquelle la science-fiction d'Ursula K. Le Guin marque le rôle du consentement dans la métaphore, un acte qui décentre la relation expérientielle avec le monde comme source d'interactions métaphoriques, et qui souligne le rôle de la métaphore pour accéder à l'immesurable, ainsi qu'à l'inconnu. Une combinaison du système complexe de la métaphore de Le Guin et du travail de Paul Ricœur tant dans la métaphore que dans la composition d'actes de volonté définit les structures et usages résultants de la métaphore dans la littérature comme dans le monde. Au sein des structures exposées dans ce travail, la métaphore s'insère dans quatre catégories, déterminées selon où, quand, et par qui le consentement est offert : la métaphore vive, les mots métaphorisés, la métaphore effacée et la métaphore déterminative. Ces structures indiquent les usages et les mésusages de la métaphore au sein des dynamiques sociales et politiques, en plus d'offrir une illustration de la façon dont la métaphore permet l'expansion dans l'inconnu.

Le texte qui suit est construit en quatre chapitres, chacun d'entre eux abordant quatre interactions différentes et se basant sur quatre romans de Le Guin et un de ses romans courts. Les chapitres et les sujets vont comme suit : l'inconnu dans *The Left Hand of Darkness* (*La Main gauche de la nuit*); la gouvernance dans *The Dispossessed* (*Les Dépossédés*); l'Autre dans *The Eye of the Heron* (*L'Œil du héron*), « A Woman's Liberation » (« Libération d'une femme ») et *The Left Hand of Darkness*; la création dans *The Telling* (*Le Dit d'Aka*). La relation qu'entretient Le Guin avec l'interaction basée sur le respect place l'auteure dans une position qui permet une conception claire de la façon selon laquelle le consentement est productif dans la métaphore, à travers chacun des quatre styles d'interactions de la métaphore – vivante, mot métaphorisé, effacée et déterminative – avec ces variétés de consentement : éclairé, historique, emprunté ou fabriqué. De plus, le travail de Le Guin va jusqu'au bout pour suggérer des résultats de l'usage de chacun des différents

styles de la métaphore, soit dans une expansion du monde du destinataire, soit dans la répression du référent de la métaphore.

Mots clés : métaphore, consentement, effacé, déterminatif, Ursula K. Le Guin, Paul Ricœur, science-fiction, inconnu, immesurable

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Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations 8

Introduction:

With Respect to the Future 9

Chapter One:

The Edge of the World: Making Peace with the Unknown in Le Guin 45

Chapter Two:

Only Means: Governance and Metaphor in *The Dispossessed* 91

Chapter Three:

My Sister, My Brother, My Other: The Alien in Le Guin 136

Chapter Four:

Something from Nothing: Acts of Creation in Le Guin's *The Telling*. 177

Conclusion 209

Works Cited 215

List of Abbreviations

The Dispossessed: TD

The Eye of the Heron: THE

Four Ways to Forgiveness: FWF

The Left Hand of Darkness: LHD

A Man of the People: AMOP

The One's Who Walk Away from Omelas: OWWA

People of the Peace: PoP

The Telling: TT

The Wind's Twelve Quarters: WTQ

A Woman's Liberation: AWL

The Word for World is Forest: WFWF

Introduction: With Respect to the Future

> . . . I was soon to discover that even the seemingly most mundane of things – grammar, syntax, sentence structure – even these are animated by something unseen, dare I say, magical, behind and beyond them. That the length of our sentences, their gait, their sound, that our use of tense, of point of view, of pronouns, all have their histories, their stories, their political and cultural implications, and each could be a building block, a concrete gesture, for good or for ill, toward an imagined future world. (Naimon, 14)

According to Ursula K. Le Guin, "the future, in fiction, is metaphor" (Le Guin, intro LHD, np). The syntax of that statement creates a profoundly interesting possibility, a double understanding. By placing the modifier after the subject and within a subordinate clause (which of course is removable without compromising the sentence), Le Guin creates an alternative statement worth considering: the future is metaphor. Because of the sentence structure, it is a suggestion rather than a claim, but that double meaning left on the page is an idea of the utmost importance because, whether the actual material future is a metaphor or not, standing where we do, with a past we remember in a present with which we can interact, we find that the only way to deal with a future that to us is strictly abstract is to negotiate that future through metaphor. So, the statement that "the future is metaphor" becomes a fascinating but also startlingly accurate statement that requires a pause with each reading, one which

suggests that metaphor must be more than the straightforward claims that have been argued and discussed since Aristotle's first statements about the form would suggest.

Not unlike Friedrich Nietzsche's claim that language is in its essence metaphorical, that each "leap from one sphere into the heart of another, new sphere" (stimulus to image, image to word) (4) is metaphorical, Le Guin presents the shifts in our thinking about time, future, and literature as metaphorical as they all include states/relationships for which "we have no other way[] at hand for thinking" (Suvin, SF as Metaphor, 188).[1] Specifically concerning the future, for humans at any given moment, the future does not yet exist and is unreachable, and can thus only be considered from a metaphorical position – a position that demands the substitution of what is not for what is; in other words, we replace that unknown future with an imagined one. Indeed, the future must be approached through the imaginary because "the speculative is the condition of the possibility of the conceptual" (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 355). Creation depends on the imagination; stories offer alternative worlds and a consideration of alternative results. Science fiction specifically deals with a future that is alternative, or as Nick Hubble would have it, "[r]ealist fiction sets out to describe the world; science fiction (SF) sets out to change it" (xii) through either extrapolation begun at the present moment or "a thought experiment within a larger conversation about the cultural production of science and its implications" (Milburn, 562). Yet, regardless of the attempts of the wildest of imaginations, the future

[1] Fictional – and specifically SF texts – can be considered as "totalizing and thematic metaphors" (Suvin, SF as Metaphor, 198), or, as Le Guin's states, "All fiction is metaphor. Science fiction is metaphor. What sets it apart from older forms of fiction seems to be its use of new metaphors" (Introduction LHD, np).

remains metaphorical because, for us, the future is not only what it *is* not, but also what it *cannot* be, that is, that future we imagine. As such, Le Guin is correct; despite all the global maneuvering and manipulation of countless think-tank's and governing bodies, and despite all pretense at prediction, except in the very broadest of strokes, the future will not be as we have imagined it, although what we imagine will change that future in profound and unknown ways. So – as we cannot ignore the fact that the present stretches blindly into what is to come – the question becomes, how do we interact with a dynamic, unstable, and *unavoidable* future?

Le Guin's work suggests that if we are not to slip into utilitarianism and end in dystopia, we must respond specifically through living metaphor and, through that response, recognize (if not absolutely change) our relationship with the unknown.[2] For Le Guin, the unknown is the frame inside which the known resides, and that framework is the repository of all potential: "Praise then darkness and creation unfinished" (LHD, 246). That word, "unfinished," contains the potential without which life cannot exist, and in the recognition of that potential and the "darkness" within which it resides – a darkness that by default creates and then reifies the need to accept the unknown and unknowable as extant, and then notes the risk inherent in all interactions with that unknown – must come the recognition that it is only because of that darkness that imagination is possible: "The unknown. . .the unforetold, the unproven, that is what life is based on" (Le Guin, LHD,71). Thus, Le

[2] Note that Le Guin's unknown is not limited to the unknown of Jacques Lacan, i.e. the real, the desire of the Other that cannot be accessed (although Lacan's unknown plays a part in discussions of the unknown Other).

Guin's work suggests that through the conscious and respectful imagining of each immediate next step (as opposed to the series of sweeping leaps to an assumed end that is prediction) combined with the occasional considered "guess"[3] that includes an underlying and resilient comprehension of the inevitable inaccuracies and limitations (i.e. the subjectivity) of those imaginings, we create a method by which to move forward. In fact, not only is the concept presented in multiple texts, but in fact, Le Guin enacts this methodology in her own interaction with metaphor in the many texts that comprise her science fiction oeuvre.

It is through metaphor and the consent that necessarily is embedded within all metaphor (as will be discussed) that Estraven (LHD) is able to interact with the unknowns of the ice and the Ekumen, and through metaphor that Shevak (TD) can offer "open hands" that share with the Other the fruits of his remarkable research which dramatically changes a multitude of worlds, and as well, it is through metaphor that Sutty (TT) can face a world in which the "impossible" happens under the eye of the sceptic. As well, it is only through metaphor that such discussions *can* happen because metaphor allows for expression that is elided and foreclosed in rational language. Only with a combination of rational language and metaphor can one reach that which is reasonable if applying the definition "possessing sound judgement" (MW) because that judgement must include the unknown and the

[3] The difference between a guess and a prediction is an important detail of this work. A guess is respectful of the unknown and the guesser's relationship with that unknown allowing scope for an infinite range of variables; whereas, in prediction, in which one claims knowledge of the future, often in order that the prediction can then be presented as an "end" which justifies the predictor's choice of "means," that claim and the resulting approach by necessity limits the variables of that future. Although the difference is subtle, it is determinative. As will be discussed in detail in the first chapter, any claim to an ability to know circumscribes the unknown, changing its shape and scope.

unmeasurable if one is to hope for any measure of accuracy in its reflection of the world. Criticism of the metaphor as lacking in “identity or specificity” (de Man, Epistomology, 28) presupposes that value lies only in the measurable, and although lack of accuracy is not to be dismissed, if one neglects the unmeasurable, the world is circumscribed, presenting another form of inaccuracy.

As such, this work will focus on four of Le Guin’s science fiction novels and one novella and her use of metaphor within those texts through the medium of four different subjects: the unknown (*The Left Hand of Darkness*), governance (*The Dispossessed*), the Other/alien (*The Left Hand of Darkness*, “A Woman’s Liberation,” and *The Eye of the Heron*), and creation (*The Telling*). Through these surprising and still fresh interactions with worlds that do not exist, Le Guin uses metaphor to create methods of engagement with which to interact with the unfamiliar, the unlikely, and the impossible – a profoundly necessary set of skills in any world. Le Guin’s use of metaphor allows the text to establish and access sites of interchange between the measurable and the immeasurable: i.e. the known, the unknown and the unknowable. In Le Guin’s work, metaphor and the moment of consent that is embedded in all metaphor act as an interface whose results change according to the form of that consent, decentering metaphor as materially sourced, and creating a dialectic between the material and the immaterial that allows for a consideration of the known, unknown and the newly imagined. As such, Le Guin’s novel use of metaphor creates an alternative imaginary to much (if not all) of the science fiction cannon.

NEGOTIATING THE FUTURE WITH SCIENCE FICTION

Described variously as "heretic subject matter" (Suvin, *Meta*, xiv), a "major bone of contention" (Westfahl, 1), "an improper joining of radically different domains" (Milburn, 560), and a series of "ongoing processes of negotiation" (Bould, 1), processes that are as resistant to measure as a "wispy cloud" (Gunn, Introduction, ix), the parameters of science fiction seem to exist within more disagreement than accord, a form of "Genre War" (Easterbrook, 510) but one that exists internally (Easterbrook coined the phrase in a discussion of SF's position among other genre as "paraliterature").[4] It is a debate that became nastily overt in the Sad/Rabid Puppy controversy during the 2015 Hugo Awards.[5] That said, genre itself is a fraught and troubled concept, one that Le Guin has repeatedly suggested is intertwined with and determined by marketing: "Genre, in fact, is now pretty much a function of the publisher's presentation or the author's reputation" (Le Guin, Lost, np). But assuming we accept the fact of genre, even the date of inception for the genre of SF varies by thousands of years depending on who is doing the defining and by what

[4] Michael Kandel labels the controversy "genre apartheid" (2) in his text "Is Something New Happening in Science Fiction?" suggesting more than a mere disagreement through his implication of serious suppression founded in power structures based in racism and patriarchy.

[5] The Sad/Rabid Puppy controversy was an attempt of the extreme right – a faction who wanted to return SF to its "roots", i.e. straight, white, male – to control who was nominated for the 2015 Hugo awards and ended with "no award" as the result in five categories (the total number of no awards given over the life of the award previously was five) (Dean, np). The episode is a direct reflection of what Le Guin describes in her introduction to the Norton Book of Science Fiction: "It [hard SF] denotes a fiction using hi-tech iconology with strong scientific content, solidly thought out, well researched and tough-minded*; it also often connotes a fiction whose values are male-centered, usually essentialist, often politically rightist or militaristic, placing positive ethical value upon violence*" (emphasis mine, 18), and to misquote Jane Austen critique of what defines "good company," I suspect that in defining SF "with regard to ['strong scientific content' the Rabid Puppies are] not very nice" (Persuasion, 207). Rather, the end goal seems to be to return the genre to the worst and most simplistic of its "roots" – a simple, polarized world without the complication of ethics and respect for the Other. Addendum: as this text is being submitted, the 2018 Hugo awards were announced with well over 50% of the awards going to women (Hugo, np), a hopeful outcome.

standards. Claims of original/first authors are as widely divergent as the ancient Greeks to Mary Shelley to that “new kind of storyteller” who offers “a new kind of *prophecy*” (Warner, xiii, emphasis mine), H.G. Wells. In their *Concise History of Science Fiction,* Mark Bould and Sherryl Vint claim SF as no genre at all, declaring “there is no such *thing* as SF, but instead multiple and constantly shifting ways of producing, marketing, distributing, consuming and understanding texts as SF” (1). As such, SF remains in a constantly liminal position, unstructured and changeable – if not exactly fluid – despite demands for stability and definite statement.

Indeed, the splits that exist in SF are profound, and as such, the determining hallmarks and mandates of the genre produce nearly as much debate as the inception date, with critics and authors weighing in in order to either limit who is included or dodging what has been and, arguably, continues to be considered a stain on one’s literary reputation. The more ridiculous moments of the debate include Isaac Asimov’s application of outrageous limitations as to subject matter, “Science fiction deals with scientists working at science in the future” (Asimov, Extraordinary, 22), and Margaret Atwood insisting that her work cannot be science fiction if it includes no “spaceships and monsters” (Potts, np), a theme she has repeated multiple times including in answer to Marleen S. Barr when she refused to allow *Oryx and Crake* to be categorized as SF insisting upon the term speculative fiction because “science fiction includes rockets and giant squids” (430) (a problematic statement, Barr notes, as both rockets and giant squids exist in the present world and in the case of the

squids only once in SF).[6] Both responses are obviously problematic and suggest a "house divided against itself" (Barr, 430) whether those attempts are made in an effort to include or exclude, and are reflected not least in efforts to keep the genre plot driven and unabashedly male oriented. Le Guin, herself, noted in the 1975 special issue of *Science Fiction Studies* that if the "status of women in society is a pretty reliable index of the degree of civilization of that society" then we should "ponder about whether SF is civilised at all" especially considering the way the genre seemed to be profoundly "authoritarian, power-worshipping, and intensely parochial" (208).

The imposed limitations are astoundingly numerous, and even some of the great academic experts in the field have composed stringent lists of requirements as to what constitutes science fiction in their attempts to control the genre: Darko Suvin's parameters create a situation in which a "huge portion of the total literary output [presently categorized as SF] is . . . thus labeled 'Terra Noncognita'" (Parrinder, Revisiting, 38) and thus not within those parameters.[7] Questions of

[6] With all due respect for Atwood's impressive body of work and fine mind, she does present an excellent example of the opposite end of the spectrum to Asimov's attempt to gain control of the genre he wished to define in such a way that his own work would stand as a paradigm of the form. In the statement quoted above, she seems to be claiming the right to define the parameters of a genre for which she appears to have only disdain, and – if we were to take her words seriously – one of which she has little knowledge.

[7] Suvin, himself, requires a strict limitation on the use of the term Science Fiction, which he coopted (Bould, 17). According to Suvin, only the truly novel text based on both a radical "novum" (SF and Novum, 63) and "cognitive estrangement" (Estrangement, 4) should be categorized as SF, thus, disallowing, certainly fantasy and myth, but as well, a huge number of texts that are merely stories retold in space, but also disallowing the militarized fantasy of the propagandizing branch of SF as merely pushing an agenda.

agenda and political influence come into the debate as well, with Jamil Khader noting the

> . . .imperative upon scholars to uncover, to use, Frederick Jameson's phrase, the "political unconscious" of a text – by which I mean in this case the unrecognizable gaps, the unresolved contradictions, and the hidden assumptions that govern mainstream SF texts in their rewriting of the social reality. (111)[8]

Determining tropes, intentions, and agendas all come into the debate that has raged for nearly as long as the genre has existed. Perhaps most important, because of its placement in the chronology, is Hugo Gernsback's[9] attempt to define the genre he named as a link to a soon-to-be-materialized future when he wrote that Amazing Stories was "a magazine of 'Scientifiction'" and contained stories that included "a charming romance intermingled with scientific fact and prophetic vision" (Gernsback, 3), a statement that brings us to the hallmark and determiner most relevant to this text – prophecy.

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[8] Khader's text is a criticism of Le Guin's "expropriation of blackness" (114) that, without considering the groundbreaking inclusion the text offered in its use of a black protagonist within the context of the 1960s, seems unnecessarily critical in its lack of context despite his praise of Le Guin's "relentless affirmation of the humanity of the Other" (113). Khader's argument is interesting, but to some degree self-eliding in that it requires (as do many criticisms of Le Guin's work) that the text should be more than it is by expanding subjects that were not Le Guin's focus. The argument that does justify Khader's position is based in Le Guin's choice to use said black protagonist while "[l]osing sight of Genly Ai's racialized Otherness" (113). The problem with that argument is that it assumes knowledge of Le Guin's far future world and a requirement that every text cover every issue fully – a not uncommon fault in criticism in general.

9 Hugo Gernsback, founder and editor of Amazing Stories, coined the term Science Fiction after first concocting and then losing control of the word Scientifiction (Bould, 6).

On that third page of that first issue of Amazing Stories under the magazine's masthead is a banner that reads "Extravagant Fiction Today --- Cold Fact Tomorrow" and, as noted above, Gernsback himself claims "prophetic vision" for his "charming stories" (ibid) The idea of prophecy/prediction is still extant and in fact unavoidable in discussion of the genre even today, as made clear in Marina Warner attribution of both to Wells in her 2005 introduction to the Penguin Books edition of *The Time Machine* and Khader's suggestion of SF's affect on "social reality" (ibid) as well as in any number of other discussions and essays. It is a claim that sits at the center of one of the major splits in the genre, dividing the texts into two major camps: extrapolative, often plot driven texts that valorize the military and expansionist dreams of the ultra conservative vs complex, often character driven texts which consider possible outcomes of "thought-experiment[s]" (Le Guin, Intro, LHD, np), or what Darko Suvin calls the "novum" or a "totalizing" form of "novelty" (Sf and Novum, 64) that creates alternative situations.[10] These more complex texts employ a "method which does not provide certainty but does provide speculation" (Cummins, 122) suggesting an associated split – that between prediction, with its suggestion of arcane knowledge, and the guess.

The two styles, the division between which seems to reflect the split between "hard" and "soft" SF, although that split is generally founded on whether "hard" (physics, chemistry, etc.) or "soft" (anthropology, psychology, etc.) sciences are the

[10] Obviously, many texts blur that boundary and the split is not a clean one, but there are also texts that exist fully to one side or the other of such a dividing line, and the difference in approach creates profound differences in the effects and influence of the texts despite the shared categorization within SF.

focus, produce a profound alterity between the relative texts. Although both follow an impossible/not-yet-possible series of events to an end, by definition and necessity plot driven texts produce “characters” as plot devices – objects – through an imbalance created by an extreme prioritization of the plot so that such texts move in sweeping disregard for those characters who are relevant only if useful. The result is often a profound lack of character coherence as apparent in text like Orson Scott Card’s *Ender’s Game* in which we are informed that Ender is six years old despite statements and actions that suggest the experience of a trained forty-year-old.[11] These plot driven texts are inevitably constructed to serve alternative ends whether those ends are to suit a driving market, as discussed by John Scalzi’s writer in *Redshirts* (Scalzi’s satire of plot driven SF television shows) or to quite seriously promote a specific agenda, as in the first-strike-style foreign policy that is promoted by the plot-device that is Card’s character Colonel Graff. These characters/plot-devices are often presented as completely sure they know what will happen next, how the new technology will save the world, or how the newly discovered Other will end it (consider the repeated insistence that the world is in need of saving through military action that permeates Card’s text). Each claim to prophecy is, of course, a claim of knowledge of the future as if that future already exists in static form, certainly a form of hubris, but more importantly a rigid form of limitation that disallows alternative comprehension of the situation or the space in which to imagine an alternative result. In fact, the relationship between “prophecy” and future events

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[11] There are literally dozens to hundreds of examples of this disconnect in the text; one of the first is obvious in six-year-old, first-grade Ender’s commando style fight with Stilson on page six that results in Stilson’s death.

is much more complex than such claims to a one to one action response conception of prophecy allows and, just as Suvin notes of SF in general, “is in a constant implicit dialogue with the ‘normal’ expectations of its reader” (Narrative Logic, 41) without recognition that the unknown future has no requirement to reflect the “normal.”

In fact, to understand the problematic nature of such claims and the resulting association SF has with the concept of prophecy/prediction one needs to consider the relative position the choice of vocabulary creates for the reader/analyst. As noted, in claiming a prophetic nature for the genre, one must accept (if not embrace) a future that is to some degree static if not predetermined. In other words, if one can see that future ahead, that future must already exist in some form. Even if one believes that prophecy based on extrapolation, that extrapolation by necessity limits the variables in the equation that is the prophecy; in other words, from such a position, the future is immediately circumscribed and constructed from the building blocks of the seer’s own world, e.g. the golden age writers absolutely saw SF as primarily based in scientific fact from which the future could be extrapolated, yet, while claiming knowledge of that future, those same writers ignored the “facts” of the world around them: for example, the fact of women as thinking, functioning members of the population both in general and within the scientific community. In consequence, in much of the work of early SF writers from Doc Smith to Asimov, Heinlein, and Clarke, women did not exist as recognizable subjects, but rather as props or plot-devices: female characters existed to get lunch while being rescued (Smith, *The Skylark of Space*), be kind to the less fortunate (Asimov, *Foundation and Empire*), as

willing sexual partners (Heinlein, *Stranger in a Strange Land*), or they simply did not exist at all (Clarke, *2001: A Space Odyssey*).[12] Although the list is a series of single specific instances of a perspective-based extrapolation, the point remains: how is it possible to predict/prophesize the future without implementing the inaccuracies/bias of the seer's perception of the present?

These failures to see the world of the present and the presumption that the future is there for the writer to predict work together to create a split between the extreme conservative position of many SF writers – i.e. Card's thinly veiled propaganda, Heinlein's militaristic stance on the other as offered by his text *Starship Troopers*,[13] and of course, the transformation of Clarke's protagonist, Dave, evolving into a sentient being godlike in its capacity – and a world filled with subjects who might not be white, male, or straight and those writers who reflect that world in their work: Ursula Le Guin, John Scalzi, Ann Leckie and a host of others. The message of many if not most of those plot driven texts is clear: men (not humans) are masters of the universe. It is a stance that even the single fact of climate change would seem to contradict, and yet it continues; even within the last thirty years, these writers of plot-driven (and consequently limiting and inaccurate) texts have been lauded as visionary: "Isaac Asimov and Robert A. Heinlein . . . filled the pages of Astounding with stories devastating in their originality and *Olympian in*

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[12] This is not to say there is nothing of value in Golden-age SF; I do, however, wish to note the built-in inaccuracies of these influential writers.

[13] Suvin quotes Pringle and Clute as characterizing Heinlein's text as showing "aggrieved partiality" going on to say that Heinlein's "strength and flaw in *Starship Troopers* is world-excision. Not only is there no civilian life in it, but any and all 'animality' outside of fighting" not to mention no "love" or "female element" (Starship, 127). I would argue the "flaw" is considerably more obvious than the strength.

their inevitability" (Gunn, Education, 9, emphasis mine), godlike indeed, and as such, inaccurate. So, as it is unlikely that these writers and critics would admit to a belief in predestination, if the world reflects the confabulations of SF, one has to conclude that when a writer seems to successfully predict the future, the text is not predicting the future – it is constructing it.[14]

If the conservative forces within SF claim that we/they can "know" any number of "truths" – what will happen in the future, the results of a next move, the identity of the Other, etc. – Suvin's discussion of cognitive estrangement as a necessary element of SF is a consideration of what it is that we do *not* know, both in our present world and any future one we can imagine. That said, although Suvin "rigorously rejects any attempt to limit science fiction to the functions of prophecy or extrapolation" (Parrinder, Revisiting, 44), Suvin's claim that "It is intrinsically or by definition impossible for SF to acknowledge any metaphysical agency" (Suvin, Novum, 83) draws an impossibly hard line and creates an untenable standard for a genre that occurs in a world that is not materially extant just as it implies a god-like ability in access to knowledge. As Parrinder notes, Suvin's parameter "implies that the purpose of SF is one of *truth-telling*" (Revisiting, 44), a statement which brings our attention to the fact that the most troubling parallel between Suvin and the hard SF cohort is not subject matter but inflexibility.[15] Parrinder goes on to suggest that,

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[14] Le Guin herself takes exception to the idea of SF as prediction stating in the 1976 introduction of *The Left Hand of Darkness*, "the 'future,' on any quantum level, *cannot* be predicted," going on to add "Science fiction is not predictive; it is descriptive" (np). Her position is supported by her fiction, a point that will be discussed more fully.

[15] Suvin's contributions to theory regarding SF have been considerable including the important concepts of the novum and cognitive dissonance, and should not be downplayed, but his absolute stance on what is and what is not SF mirrors the central issue of a community in which a huge number of the members create limitations as to who gets to join the club. Later in his career, his

as “the future cannot be predicted with any certainty” (Parrinder, Revisiting, 45) and notes that Suvin is suggesting that such apparently predictive moments in the genre act as “heuristic models” (Parrinder quoting Suvin, Revisiting, 45). Although Parrinder is suggesting the term means that SF allows the reader to prepare for this unknown future, what he neglects to note is that that preparation acts to create the very future for which one prepares and so, in that one analogy, switches the role of SF from prediction to construction, and in doing so changes the relationship between SF and agency.

In fact, SF incorporates whatever situated position that writer himself inhabits, and that situated position does not need to be overt for the transference to occur. Jason Haslem notes in his text *Gender, Race, and American Science Fiction: Reflections on Fantastic Identities*, the role SF plays as an agent of social constructions is variable, and not “all SF offers a radical undermining or critique of the dominant order” in that any text “may return to the (unconscious) functioning of the symbolic order” (12). Thus SF, particularly plot driven SF, embeds in its constructions the world as the writer perceives it, an inclusion that acts as a limitation on what can/will happen next.[16] And it is here, in Haslem’s reference to the figurative, that the discussion must include the relationship between SF and metaphor, and in prompting that discussion yet another must take place first: a

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position has become less emphatic in his statement that in the end, criteria are “reducible to a preference for one model over another” (Novum, 5).

[16] As SF has become a “dystopian mode” (RMP, 35), the question of fiction acting as a template for the future becomes a terrifying possibility. If we recreate that which we imagine, rather than acting as a warning, SF becomes a template.

discussion determining the relationship between metaphor and respect. In this text, such a discussion must begin with Le Guin.

Le Guin and Respect

In a genre which has been, historically, overwhelmingly dominated by men, Le Guin was an anomaly for the first half of her career; now, despite more and more female writers in the genre, Le Guin continues as anomalous, not because of her gender, but because of her relationship with respect for the Other, and in consequence, with metaphor. Her position as a force in science fiction as well as a renowned writer in other genre (in particular fantasy) became unavoidable when she won both the Hugo and Nebula awards in two different instances for her novels *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed*. She was the first woman to do so and, at the time, the only author to do so twice. Hundreds of articles and dozens of books have been written concerning Le Guin and her oeuvre, including a number of monographs as well as Donna R. White's extremely useful text organizing and summarizing the criticism that was written before 1999, *Dancing with Dragons: Ursula K. Le Guin and the Critics*. What becomes clear in reading the criticism of Le Guin's work, both laudatory and critical, is that Le Guin moves people, and perhaps more importantly, Le Guin responds to people. While this text does not have time or space to go over all aspects of the criticism in this introduction, there

are important recurrent themes and patterns that feed into this discussion of metaphor.[17]

In his brief monograph of Le Guin's work *The Farthest Shores of Ursula K. Le Guin*, George Slusser took note of one of the important motifs that filters through nearly all of Le Guin's work: Taoism. That central and repeated pattern within Le Guin's text is likely one of the causes of her anomalous position in that what Rafail Nudelman noted as most remarkable in Le Guin's texts was an "extraordinary interconnectedness" (212) that used "causal connection" without a linear timeline (210), a move that creates a wholistic patterning that allows for completion of storyline on multiple levels – suggesting too, that any world is made up of layered stories that work on both micro and macro levels and bridge the strata on which the various tales unfold. Returning to the original comment, Slusser's engagement with the texts and with the text's engagement with Taoism is astute and carefully produced, and an important addition to previous work[18] – but his work is produced deep within the situated positioning of conservative, male academia, a position from which he refers to Genly and Estraven as "the two men" (28) without a blink or a reference to the storm that was already raging over Le Guin's presentation of Estraven as what feminist critics viewed as primarily male despite the radical concept she had introduced in creating Gethenians as dual-gender. Although Le Guin received kudos from many quarters over her radical innovations in gender

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[17] I heartily encourage a reading of White's discussion of the criticism of the first four decades of Le Guin's career. Both thorough and even-handed, White gives the reader an overall conception of the discussions and conflicts that were part of Le Guin's evolution.

[18] White notes that Slusser's texts includes "the best discussion of *shifgrethor* I have seen in the criticism" (57).

presentation in LHD, some members of the feminist community took issue regarding Le Guin's choice of pronoun – "he" – and what they felt was the eliding of female roles in presenting Gethenians. This argument will be addressed later in detail but is relevant here not because of the positions, but rather, because of the way Le Guin has responded to her critics, both feminist and "not."

Le Guin has been called many names, and many varieties of adjectives have been applied to her work and her self, but invariably Le Guin, whose texts often deal with questions of "Wholeness and Balance" (Barbour, title), has responded with respectful, if sometimes heated, discussion. The more notable accolades have included Robert Schole's statement that Le Guin is "probably the best writer of speculative fabulation working in this country today" (Scholes, 35-36), Suvin's characterization of Le Guin's writing as having "thrust and strength" (Parables, 265), and Harold Bloom's unequivocal categorization of *The Left Hand of Darkness* as a "masterpiece" (2). That said, the reviews have not all been laudatory, and still Le Guin has remained respectful. Even when Norman Spinrad referred to Le Guin as a "hectoring guru," "a noble granola eating woman" (not a compliment in the context), and "the token nigger of the literary establishment" (qtd by White, 97), White notes that her responding "letter was a polite reassurance that she does indeed still consider herself a science fiction writer. She signed the letter 'Granola Eating Woman'" (White, 97). Clearly, Le Guin's response reflects her own standards of behavior rather than Spinrad's.

In terms of the feminist debate, Le Guin's response was at first slightly (and in my estimation understandably and even possibly legitimately) defensive;

however, her extended response was unusual in that she listened and changed, choosing to educate herself in feminist theory and to attempt to expand texts already written and published, after which she worked to evolve her writing choices to address what she felt was an unintentional but unfortunate limited scope of view in her early writing. As Lisa Hammond Rashley puts it, "she [Le Guin] has never been afraid to consider and reconsider her positions" (22). Her response was unquestionably admirable, but the point of this discussion is not to defend Le Guin; it is to address the question that I have been asked on multiple occasions during the completion of this text: if my concern is to comprehend and deconstruct the way in which metaphor is formed and functions, why use the works of Ursula K. Le Guin? The answer to that question is that Le Guin's metaphors suggest a quite radical relationship with respect: that it is respect that allows for consent, and consent is an unavoidable component of metaphor.

Although a polite and thoughtful response to her critics is an impressive demonstration of maintaining a respectful relationship with the other while under fire, the more important demonstrations of Le Guin's respect are found embedded within the relationships Le Guin maintains with her texts, the characters, the readers, and the unknown – and thus, in metaphor. In "Where do You Get Your Ideas From" from *Dancing at the Edge of the World*, Le Guin, herself, describes her process of writing, making the statement, "A story rises from the springs of creation, from the pure will to be; it tells itself; it takes its own course, finds its own way, its own

words; and the writer's job is to be its medium" (198).[19] She goes on to add, "[t]he writer, writing, then is trying to get all the patterns of sounds, syntax, imagery, ideas, emotions, working together in one process, in which the reader will be drawn to participate." This allusion to orchestration flirts with a suggestion of control which Le Guin notes and then defuses, as she finishes with a statement that makes reference to the unquantifiable nature of all teamwork, the "magic" of interconnected efforts: "I think it comes down to collaboration, or sharing the gift" because "the words never fully embody the text" (199). As Jim Jose puts it, for Le Guin "it is the reader who completes the story" (181).[20] This discussion of method signals a series of respectful relationships in which Le Guin relinquishes control in order that all the elements can fall into place and both the characters and the readers be offered the space necessary to the process of creation. It's worth noting that this process or method includes accepting that the text itself is an unknown, certainly in the time before it is finished, but noting as well that the text will remain an unknown as long as there are unknown readers who may someday choose to take part in the

[19] This description sounds mystic, and many critics have found it difficult to speak of Le Guin without using vocabulary that goes beyond metaphor to engage with what appears to be a kind of metaphysical mysticism. Suzanne Elizabeth Reid speaks of "age-old patterns" and "wisdom" (1); Scholes calls her "The Good Witch of the West" (35), and Bloom constantly refers to mythology in his discussions of both Le Guin and her writing. Of course, Le Guin herself uses metaphor that reaches outside the material to explain both her own process and that of her characters despite her own dislike of the occult (qt by Galbreath, 37). This need for words that attempt to signify the invisible seems to be in response to an engagement with the immeasurable and directly connected to a need for metaphor.

[20] Le Guin's position on the spectrum of relationships that compose a text touches – or at least brings to mind – Roland Barthes' ideas in "The Death of the Author," in which he "breaks habits" (Lietch, 1457) (specifically habits of reading), and makes the statement that "the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins" (Barthes, 1466). However, despite initial similarities, it seems unlikely that Le Guin would agree to what at least appears to be a fairly total negation of the writer that exists within Barthes' most extreme claims. For Le Guin, a text is a collaboration, but the roles are not equal nor equally weighted. Like any dance, each dancer has her/his own choreography, sometimes in unison and sometimes danced alone.

creation/re-creation of the text. This temporally fluid – "four-dimensional?" – approach to a text produces an astoundingly large variety in interaction.

In approaching the reader as a formative and influential element of the final product, Le Guin changes the engagement to one that by definition must allow that reader to exist as an agent, creating a scenario in which, because the text is recreated with each reading, the process never ceases and must be reinvented in each engagement. A courageous endeavor, and one that this text will argue reflects the form of a living metaphor. The structure of a text within Le Guin's conception of the process requires an interconnection of a huge variety of respectful relationships each of which, by definition, is constructed on consent – certainly that of the writer and the reader – but also, arguably that of the text and the characters as well.

CONSENT AND METAPHOR

In the 1978 text *On Metaphor* Ted Cohen opens his essay "Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy" with a discussion of whether or not metaphors have meaning: "The central, fundamental question concerns meaning. Does a metaphorical statement possess, in addition to its literal meaning . . .another (metaphorical) meaning wherein resides its capacity to be true. . .?" (4). The question, of course, lies at the base of the major split in all discussions of metaphor; which prevails – semiotics or semantics? Does the primacy of the word exceed the semantic meaning of the phrase or vice versa? Is metaphor decorative wordplay or an attempt to access that which cannot be expressed literally? a way to create beauty or portal to the immeasurable? Although it will become clear that this text agrees

with Paul Ricoeur's conception of metaphor as a semantic form and thus a possessor of meaning, what is undeniable regardless of the theorist's position is that, whether or not metaphor has meaning, what metaphor does possess to a frightening degree is influence.

Theory of metaphor is not only a "messy reality" (Gibbs, 4), but as well a complex field with a "tremendous diversity of work" (Gibbs 12) (Ricoeur calls metaphor theory "boundless" [Metaphorical, 141]), and includes a huge variety of approaches, approaches which include "neural theory" (Lakoff, Neural, 17), "structure-mapping" (Gentner and Bowdle, 109), and the relationship between culture and body (Yu, 247), to name a few of the interactions. Thus, theory of metaphor interconnects fields of study as diverse as neurology, psychology, philosophy, music, literary studies, and many more. Although there has been important work produced on how metaphor underlies our world through conceptual/cognitive metaphors' construction of culture (Lakoff, *Metaphors*, 4) – or as Ning Yu puts it, "metaphors are grounded in bodily experience but shaped by cultural understanding" (247) – the insistence that metaphor is at least to some degree universal because of the connection to empirical experience (Yu, 248) that pervades the empirical study of metaphor limits much of the present theories' awareness of particularity: in fact Yu claims that "our common bodily experience" creates metaphor that "are more likely to be universal" (248). Although few theorists would claim that all metaphor is universal, the tendency to assume that the shared state of our bodily relationships with the world create a universal understanding of that world tends to produce an approach that elides the specificity

and particularity of metaphor, and thus, the specific effects of agents within an interaction. Because of this unfortunate and widespread tendency to paint metaphor as universal and the stasis that exists in absolute statement, this text will use Paul Ricoeur as its primary theorist**.** Ricoeur's open-ended discussion of the fluidity and movement, the "*epiphora*," of metaphor (*Rule*, 17) that cannot exist in other figures because metaphor is not merely a noting of similarity (simile) or a positioning of proximity (metonymy) but in fact "sets predicative operations in motion" (*Rule*, 155) moving between the impertinent to the pertinent,[21] his placement of the metaphor "between words and sentences" (*Rule*, 156), his complex layering of semic fields, and not least, his earlier work on acts of will create a position that reflects Le Guin's texts' suggestion that metaphor must be reinvented in each new moment of its existence if it is not to become a repressive force.

Ricoeur's conception of the "self-transcendence of language,"[22] specifically that of metaphor as a semantic form (*Rule*, 85), allows space for the forgotten element within the structure of metaphor, an element that Le Guin's fiction puts in place over and over again and one that suggests that, although metaphor must be a

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[21] Ricoeur's work on impertinent predication stems out of earlier work by Jean Cohen, *Structure du langage poétique,* but discussion of predication in this text is based directly on Ricoeur text *The Rule of Metaphor*.

[22] Ricoeur's recognition of the complexity of metaphor and his refusal to attempt to foreclose that complexity and the resulting movement within the form makes him the best option for this text. Far too many theorists attempt to simplify or limit metaphorical form; Denis Donoghue, for example, opens his 2014 text on metaphor with the statement that "It [definition of metaphor] supposes that there is an ordinary word that could have been used but hasn't been," noting that such a definition is "good enough" (1). Admittedly, Donoghue undercuts his own definition later in the text when he notes that "there is no reason to assume that there are words for everything" (183), a position which suggests the outlier that is a metaphorical moment would be the moment when vocabulary is most extended. Certainly, Le Guin's use of metaphor suggests that such a definition is not "good enough" and that there is no "ordinary word" for the situation, and it is there, in the lack of that "ordinary word," that the metaphor exists.

shared understanding, it cannot be assumed to be universal. Rather, to understand the structures of metaphor and its effect in the world, Le Guin suggests we must consistently maintain an awareness of the moment of consent: i.e. by whom, where, and when consent is given in any moment of metaphor, a position upheld in Ricoeur's work:

> Inasmuch as ordinary language differs from an ideal language in that it has no fixed expressions independent of their contextual uses, to understand discourse is to interpret the actualization of its polysemic values according to *the permissions and suggestions proposed by the context*. (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 381, emphasis mine)

In other words, rather than an objectivists assumption that, because metaphor must be a shared experience to function, that need suggests a state of universality, both Le Guin's and Ricoeur's work suggests any moment of metaphor is particular and fluid and contains a moment of consent, and the degree to which fluidity is maintained is determined by the placement of that moment of consent. In other words, how, where and when that consent is posited determines what form the metaphor takes and its effect in the world.

Whether or not one wishes to believe that metaphors construct the world in general, the fact that metaphors construct the world in which we live is undeniable: Karsten Harries makes the statement that "metaphor joins dissimilars not so much to let us perceive in them some previously hidden similarities but to create something altogether new" (71). Lakoff and Johnsons discussion of the metaphor "argument is war" is just one example that clearly demonstrates that "[m]any of the things we *do*

in arguing are partially structured by the concept of war" (4) as promoted by the metaphor that structures the thinking around argument. Thus, the language surrounding the action of arguing – "indefensible," "attack," "won/winning" – is one "we live by in this culture, [as] it structures the actions we perform in arguing" (4). As such, the metaphors by which we live create and are created by the culture in which we live with each working as an element in an interconnected system[23] that includes multiple forms of metaphor. That said, the construction of those metaphors is not a benign process that always occurs organically, and it does not imply universality.

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[23] Conceptual metaphor theory is mapped in a series of texts by Lakoff and Johnson and later Lakoff and Turner. For a succinct overview, at the opening of her text *Metaphor and Corpus Linguistics*, Alice Deignan outlines the basic precepts – "Metaphors structure thinking; Metaphors structure knowledge: Metaphor is central to abstract language; Metaphor is grounded in physical experience; Metaphor is ideological" (13). My novel system of categorization does not call conceptual metaphor into question in general but does call into question some of the position from which the work thus far has taken place. Lakoff and Johnsons experientialist and empiricist approach has a number of productive facets, including their conception of "interactional properties" (214), their structure of "entailments" (9), their conclusion that metaphor is based in "imaginative rationality" (235), and a careful decomposition of how metaphor plays into conception (56); however, their linear approach, their slide into universalist conceptions despite their attempts to reject hard objectivism, and their final position that there is no "absolute truth" (226) figures their position as closed. This closed position seriously limits their work in terms of usefulness to this text in that Le Guin's work posits the need for both consent in metaphor and a respectful relationship with the unknown founded in consent to/acceptance of our position in an unknown universe, Kant's inaccessible "thing in itself" including his claim that "cognition reaches appearances only, leaving the thing in itself as something actual for itself but unrecognized by us" (112). Although my argument is not one of transcendental idealism, both positions require space for recognition of *a lack of access* to some knowledge – potentially including "absolute truth" – rather than Lakoff and Johnson's claim that said knowledge *does not exist* – itself a claim to knowledge they cannot possess. In other words, whether or not an absolute truth exists, that truth is not available to the perceiver, but its existence must be left as an open question whether in a relationship with an Other or an unknown universe. In the statement that absolute truth does not exist, they become Nietzsche's agent who is "indifferent to pure knowledge" (2) and fail even to admit the possibility of said knowledge because that knowledge is unavailable to them. Without an open-ended conclusion, both teams (Lakoff and Johnson and Lakoff and Turner) become the other side of a polarized discussion which elides the very middle ground on which they claim to stand. As well, as Elena Simino and Gerard Steen note, the cognitive approach that the two teams promote "tends to underestimate the importance of totally novel metaphors" found in literature despite offering some "profound insights into the relationship between metaphor in literature and metaphor in everyday language" (326), a related problem in that novel or "living metaphor" (Ricoeur, 344) requires particularity and an open-ended final position.

Le Guin's use of metaphor combined with Ricoeur's conceptions of the acts and actions of metaphor – i.e. predication which includes consent – suggests that there is an alternative methodology by which to understand the effects of metaphor within the world and within literature. A thorough analysis of Le Guin's metaphor (specifically within her SF novels) suggests that there are four specific supersets of metaphor – living metaphor (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 344), metaphorized word, effaced metaphor (Derrida, White, 8), and determinative metaphor (as is outlined in chapter 3) – whose connection and construction is determined by each of the four's relative relationship with consent which in turn creates each type of metaphor's relative effect in the world. Although this schema organizes and suggests possible outcomes as determined by where, when, and by whom consent occurs, it does not limit the forms metaphor takes nor negate the question Gardner and Winner pose as to "whether various types of metaphor (cross-sensory, perceptual, psychological-physical, predicative, etc) each require their own analysis" (123). Rather, a vast multiplicity of metaphor can exist within this system and can be analyzed using a variety of methodologies. In fact, in a discussion of Le Guin's novella *The Word for World is Forest*, Ian Watson evokes the metaphor of "deforestation" as the Terran's response "to the mysteries of the wood" (232), a metaphor that Watson claims represent the subconscious dream life that so terrifies them. It seems clear that attempts to define metaphor generally act to limit the form metaphor takes reflecting just such a "deforestation" in its refusal of the broad spectrum and reach of metaphor. Thus, the method of categorization this text argues does not limit those forms but does note that within each of those different forms exists a particular step

in the process, and that step is one of the central factors in understanding the effect of each individual metaphor on the environment in which it is implemented. As such, the variety remains and not all of it can be answered rationally through simple equations. After all, just like in the forests of Athshe, "there [is] no seeing everything at once, no certainty" (82) in metaphor, so we must avoid the instinct to attempt to "know" everything.

So, in order to use the form consent takes as the standard by which to categorize metaphor, we must begin with Paul Ricoeur's text *Freedom of Will* and the embedded concept of consent. Ricoeur's "triadic interpretation of the act of will" breaks down the act of will into three separate acts: "[t]o say 'I will' means first 'I decide,' secondly 'I move my body,' thirdly 'I consent'" (*Freedom*, 6). For Ricoeur, consent becomes necessary after the decision is made, action has begun, and the agent is met with the involuntary facts of body and world: as such, consent is a necessity "that seeks to fill the gap which judgement opens up" (*Freedom*, 344). In other words, as the agent wills and acts only to be met with the facts that will change the result of that act of will – i.e. the "unbreachable limits" (*Freedom*, 345) of the world and the body – the agent is presented with a gap of information, a moment in which the agent must face her/his lack of control, that can only be met with a release of that control as embodied in the agent's consent. Because metaphor is an act of will that goes "beyond" what we know to be literally true in an effort to make reference to the non-literal and immeasurable, metaphor creates a gap – a "lexical lacuna" (Ricoeur, Metaphorical, 143) – in the known and thus requires the

consent that "fill[s] the gap" (ibid); without that consent – if the metaphor is refused as inaccurate – the metaphor fails.

However, the consent embedded within every metaphorical interchange – the acceptance of one thing for another despite clear indications or knowledge of the difference that exists between the two elements of the metaphor, Richards' tenor and vehicle (95)[24] – is multifaceted and involves multiple agents: the transmitter's consent to his or her own act of equivalency,[25] the receiver's consent that accepts the metaphor as viable, and an, often implicit, "acceptance" by the referent of the metaphor (as argued in the third and fourth chapters of this work). This last statement seems unlikely as, although within some metaphors the referent is a sentient being capable of offering consent, often the referent of metaphor is an object or state incapable of giving consent. Yet, we know bad metaphors and unacceptable metaphors exist. Of course, many theorists would look to the word "unacceptable" and state that the failure is posited in the failure of recognizable similarities and parallel substitutions that a transmitter or receiver rejects or accepts within the metaphor in question; however, Le Guin's work suggests unsuccessful metaphor is a result of a lack of "consent" from the context or structure of the metaphor itself that often prompts a refusal in the receiver.

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[24] Richard's tenor and vehicle have become the accepted terms for the paired elements of a metaphor; however, the decentering of metaphor suggests that the tenor, which Richards defines as "the underlying idea or principle subject" (97), needs to be split into two distinguishable roles – referent and source. As such, the term tenor will be used only occasionally in this discussion.

[25] Donald Davidson compares metaphor with dreaming and notes that as such it must be interpreted, and act that "requires collaboration between a dreamer and a waker, even if they be the same person" (29).

As such, that need for a complete whole suggests both a lack of linearity and a structure profoundly implicated with consent, and in fact, Le Guin's relationship with metaphor suggests not only that there is yet another kind of "consent/acceptance" that must exist, but as well, that there is a failure in the linear conception of metaphor: i.e. tenor to vehicle to use or, as Lakoff and Johnson would have it, a "concept is metaphorically structured, the activity is metaphorically structured, and, consequently, the language is metaphorically structured" (5). Theirs is an equation that suggest a completely linear causal relationship; however, Le Guin's work suggests that metaphors are not, in fact, linear, and that what appears to be a linear format is a product of our position within the metaphor, and that, in fact, changing the moment of consent creates a different form of metaphor and a different effect.

The first superset is "living metaphor," a form of metaphor that is often referred to as "novel" metaphor, although Ricoeur's term "living metaphor" is more apt for this categorization because of the dynamic construction suggested by the word "living." The attribute "dynamic" is important because living metaphor is so varied as to seem not to be a set at all in that, according to Le Guin's constructions, it can take nearly any form as long as the metaphor remains immediate and particular and consent is given in each new interaction. In other words, living metaphor is a form that must be re-constructed with each new usage and each new interactor, and as well, consent must be offered by all elements of the metaphor with each new usage. Living metaphor exists in all Le Guin's work, but in this text, the form will be considered most closely in the first two chapters' analysis of her texts *The Left*

Hand of Darkness and *The Dispossessed*, and somewhat differently in the final chapter on *The Telling*. As will be discussed, these texts suggest that living metaphor is a complex, multi-directional, layered form that creates *particularity*; i.e. it cannot be universal and must be consented to with each new usage such that the consent is always an immediate element to the interaction. The next two forms of metaphor evolve out of living metaphor but shift the moment of consent and thus change the designation of the metaphor.

The superset of metaphorized words includes words that have become literalized – or lexicalized (Ricoeur, *Rule,* 344) – or have become dead metaphor,[26] and any other form of metaphor in which the moment of consent has sunk into that embedded moment of consent that exists in general language. If one considers language an agreed upon code which, according to Nietzsche, figures all language as metaphorical – "One designates only the relations of things to man, and to express them one calls on the most daring metaphors" (4) – than the consent – that moment of *agreement* in the agreed upon code – to language is a consent to metaphor that is no longer considered a metaphorical engagement: examples would include statements like "my stomach is *burning*," reference to the *legs* of a chair, etc. Even if one does not agree with the conception of language as an agreed upon code, moments of consent in language are inescapable as made clear in the existence of dictionaries, language classes, grading rubrics, etc. In the schema this text is proposing, all cases of lexicalized metaphor fall into the first category of metaphor in

[26] The term "dead metaphor" is something of an oxymoron if one considers the metaphoric nature of language in general and what Ricoeur refers to as "the baffling fecundity of dead metaphor" (Rule, 345)

which the consent was received historically and is deemed no longer necessary either because of homonymy (a case in which an additional meaning has become a new word – buttressing a building vs buttressing an argument) or abstraction (i.e. an extension of the original meaning that no longer needs to be questioned) (Lakoff, *Metaphors*, 106). In each case, despite any original moment in which the lexicalized word existed as a living metaphor, the moment of consent is long past and sunk into the history of the language itself, a state that creates the assumptions that are necessary for general use in language such that the interchange is streamlined. Metaphorized words are most relevant to the discussions of Pravic in Chapter Two.

The third superset is that of effaced metaphor, which will be dealt with in detail in chapters two and three using the texts *The Dispossessed*, *The Eye of the Heron*, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, and "A Woman's Liberation." Effaced metaphor, as discussed in Jacques Derrida's text "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," is a metaphor that has lost contact with the material referent of said metaphor yet is too complex to be lexicalized or metaphorized: a form of "metaphysics which has effaced in itself that fabulous scene that brought it into being" (11). Derrida notes that effacement, in this case, refers to "erasure . . . but also 'usury'" (7), suggesting that the disconnect of the metaphor from its material referent allows for the misuse of metaphor.[27] It is through that disconnect between form and referent that metaphor becomes a free agent and thus subject to misuse,

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[27] In fact, specific to law, Justice Cardoza states that "Metaphors . . . though starting as devices to liberate thought . . . often by enslaving it" (qt by Winter, 363).

and the disconnect is possible because the moment of consent is given once and then borrowed for subsequent usage. Borrowed consent is not the same as assumed or historical consent in that the assumptions that underlie metaphorized words and language in general are necessary such that we are able to move through the world and language efficiently; whereas, borrowed consent is used when the consent given earlier is no longer absolutely applicable and might not be appropriate to the present interaction, and consequently, the transmitter would be unlikely to gain the necessary consent if it were sought. As such, borrowed consent is often at the base of the metaphors that create stereotyping and cultural bias. The implicit assumption (both convenient and insidious) is that if the metaphor once received consent as a living metaphor, that metaphor must be valid despite the loss of contact with the referent and the moment of consent. Effaced metaphor is everywhere and is often at the base of many forms of abuse.[28]

The fourth and final superset is composed of a form of metaphor that I have termed determinative metaphor. Determinative metaphor is quite different from the other three supersets in that it is not an outgrowth of living metaphor in that it has no experientialist referent in the material world that – if one is thinking linearly[29] – acts as source of or inspiration for the metaphor. Rather, in a determinative metaphor, the "source" of the metaphor is entirely founded in the desire of the agent to create

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[28] Here, there is an overlap with Lakoff and Johnson's work on conceptual metaphor. I suspect that if conceptual metaphors exist they occur in both the grouping of lexicalized metaphors and effaced metaphors, but as Lakoff's term is not central to this work, I will leave that consideration to the reader who wishes to follow it up.

[29] It is difficult to avoid linear thinking in metaphor and there are times when it is unavoidable perhaps because of our position within the form; however, as will be discussed in the third and fourth chapters, although our position requires a linear approach at times, the awareness of the more wholistic existence of metaphor needs to be kept in mind.

or enact an ideology that requires the figuring of the Other as object. In other words, the "source" of the metaphor is not the referent or an attempt to express or explain the referent but a desire to refigure the referent of the metaphor such that it supports the transmitter's ideology and view of the world dependant on that ideology, an example of which would be the refiguring of a person as beast or slave. The term "snowflake" functions as a determinative metaphor. What determinative metaphors do share with the other supersets is the need for consent; however, because of the need to service a desire instead of communication, that consent must be limited and manufactured. Because consent will not be guaranteed or even likely if open to all elements of the metaphor, the transmitter of a determinative metaphor limits the offer of consent only to those who will agree and then forecloses the process of consent to ensure that the necessary metaphor is completed even if in a truncated fashion; the transmitter then continues to repeat the metaphor in hopes that the repetition[30] will produce a resemblance in the material referent; again, see the term "snowflake." Determinative metaphor is necessary to all programs of class-based societies and is both brutal and clumsy, but it is *not unusual*. Le Guin's text *The Eye of the Heron* is an enactment of Orientalist methodologies and within that context an exploration of the functioning of determinative metaphor.

Such are the theoretical infrastructures of the following work, and although I have already mentioned the various foci of the chapters, below is a brief summary statement concerning each. Chapter One is a consideration of *The Left Hand of*

[30] Metaphor here acts similarly to or in tandem with performative speech acts; as such, Derrida's work "Signature, Event, Context" becomes important in its discussion of repetition.

Darkness and the living metaphor that posits the unknown as productive field and the source of all life. Chapter Two centers around *The Dispossessed* and explores the methodology and effect of effaced metaphors returning (as Le Guin's work always does) to the important living metaphors on which the text is based, that of utopia as a state that exists only in utopic actions – a position that reflects living metaphor's existence as particular and in need of re-enactment. Chapter Three is a three-part chapter that explores metaphor's relationship to various other theories including Orientalism, Feminist theory, and Queer theory; as such, determinative metaphor is a central topic. The final chapter, Chapter Four, is a discussion of Le Guin's text *The Telling* and its use of a specific form of living metaphor that I have termed materialized metaphor, a term Suvin occasionally uses to delineate a meeting of the literal and the figurative (Ain't, sect 2.2) that is related to David Hills' term "twice aptness" (147) in which literal meaning and metaphorical meaning layer over each other to create stratification. Specifically, materialized metaphor refers to those metaphors in which the material moment directly reflects the metaphorical reference, an example of which is beautifully illustrated in Nella Larson's text *Passing*, in which the protagonist wishes to metaphorically push her friend (Clare) out of her life and ends up pushing Clare out of a window. In fact, because materialized metaphor are material constructs layered over by directly matching metaphorical extensions from which they cannot be separated, the literal meaning and the figurative meaning can exist simultaneously without one cancelling the existence of the other as is the case in mis-identified symbols. As such, the layering of material and abstract goes beyond the basic orientation metaphor of Lakoff and Johnson and beyond Hills'

"twice aptness" in that the combination of both forms occur in temporal sync creating an expansion that is more than a mere doubling.

The relationship between words and the world is complex and multi-directional. As Jutta Weldes points out in her text "Popular Culture, Science Fiction, and World Politics" literature is not just a "window on the world" (Gregg qt by Weld, 12) but rather is "implicated in producing and reproducing the phenomena that Gregg and others assume they merely reflect" (12). And of course, the same can be said of metaphor; as such, the construction of that metaphor and the implications of that construction in regard to respect for the Other are of the utmost importance. Metaphor exists between – at least – the transmitter and the receiver (the role of the referent will be discussed later) and the inclusion of consent constructs an engagement in which all participants act as agents, the only infrastructure by which living metaphor and the resultant respectful engagement can exist.

In using the placement of consent as the standard by which to organize metaphor, our conception of metaphor itself is changed from a linear process that is imposed by the transmitter onto the receiver to a collaborative construction that is non-linear, suggesting a productive interconnection with the elements that make up our interface with the world. As such, metaphor becomes a joint act, a position that changes our relationship with language, the world, the unknown, and the Other to one that requires respect, and in fact, pinpoints the moment when that respect fails subverting metaphor to an abusive form. In SF, requiring consent within the metaphor that is SF removes prediction from the equation because the need for consent presupposes the gap that is present in the acknowledgement of the unknown

and the unknowable; consequently, interactions that fail in that acknowledgement – i.e. the claim to knowledge that exists in the act of prediction – produce corrosive constructions rather than productive collaboration. As metaphor is an attempt to access the unknown and the unmeasurable, to approach that attempt with anything except a profound sense of respect is a foolhardy act, and Le Guin models the dangers inherent in the hubris that prompts any such disrespectful interaction, but as well, her own approach to the process of storytelling and the embedded metaphor reiterates and posits within our world the astoundingly brilliant hope embodied in all respectful interchange.

Chapter One

The Edge of the World: Making Peace with the Unknown in Le Guin

From the first page of her novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Ursula K. Le Guin's discussion of truth and lies, fact and fiction, opens a discourse[31] on the text's epistemological position: that the act of knowing is not a conquest of the unknown;[32] rather, to "know" anything requires a respectful and fluid relationship that includes a recognition and appreciation of both the unknown and the unknowable. Le Guin's position is a form of "complex holism" that Robert Galbreath suggests is produced by her "distinctive values" (36) (in particular her relationship with respect) in his discussion of Le Guin's use of the occult, including the observation that her expression is not only literal and ironic, but necessarily metaphorical. In fact, it is from within this complex holism that the relationship between these positions of "knowing" – the known, the unknown, and the unknowable – can be recognized as producing a need for metaphor, and as well, a recognition of the way in which metaphor functions in that necessary role.

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[31] The word "discourse" has two definitions and both are at play in Le Guin's text. Obviously Le Guin's style suggests the knowledgeable consideration implied by the second definition, but as well, and despite the fact that reading appears to be a one-sided interaction in that the author is not available to hear the reader's response, through the first-person narration, the unanswered questions asked by the multiple narrators, and the fact that there *are* multiple narrators, this text suggests a discussion is in progress. Martin Bickman notes that the "variety of voices and perspectives [. . .] create a certain dimensionality and heft" (43). The implication of discussion matters because in a discussion one must synthesize what one "knows" with the unknown of the other perspectives involved.

[32] In this chapter and throughout this text unless otherwise specified, Le Guin's "unknown" does not specifically reflect Lacan's unknown – the unknown self/other – and neither is it reflective of any particular belief system as will be discussed later in the chapter. Le Guin's unknown is broader and less defined, and is specifically disassociated with the idea of belief.

In fact, Le Guin's exploration of our relationship with the act of knowing can be considered an exploration of metaphor itself in which the presumptive structure of metaphor is placed in question: i.e. the "root" of the metaphor, the material standard from which any metaphor is presumed to spring, is decentralized through the need for consent/acknowledgement, creating a more interdependent construction that gestures to the immaterial and the immeasurable – i.e. the unknowable, if to know is to provide empirical evidence. In other words, although that empirical connection is an important component of metaphor, by interacting with metaphor as if the empirical is the center and core, we lose sight of the productive, powerful and dangerous force that is harnessed in the use of metaphor. Le Guin's suggestion that the unknown – the "darkness" – is a foundational metaphor[33] that must be approached neither as a deity nor through human comprehension, magical or material, insists that metaphor is not linear at all; rather, one can adapt Gerard Klein and Richard Astle's claims about the way Le Guin's work's changes our relationship with history and time, and suggest that Le Guin's use of living metaphor exists as "a

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[33] Although some of the metaphors this text terms as "foundational" could be considered conceptual metaphors as defined by Lakoff and Turner – "metaphorical language is simply a consequence of the existence of conceptual metaphorical thought" (138) – the idea that metaphors are conceptual rather than figures of language and the insistence on an absolute departure point and the linearity on which the team insists is in direct opposition to what Le Guin is attempting. Le Guin's metaphor is a carefully constructed complex system that repeats and reflects turning around multiple departure points, as well as one that is embedded firmly in language as will be seen in the construction of Pravic. So, although several of the metaphors in Le Guin's are in fact metaphorical structures that underlie the civilization of the various texts, and thus could be considered "conceptual metaphor," the term conceptual seems less appropriate than foundational; as David Hills points out in reference to Lakoff and Turner's claims, "if conceptual metaphor is real and pervasive, even if it is at work in every instance of verbal metaphor, even if it's the thought that counts in ever so many ways, there is something verbally distinctive about verbal metaphor" (142), and I would continue beyond Hills' claim to say that cognition – and in fact consent in that cognition – is important in all metaphor, but metaphor resides most commonly in language both spoken and written and to attempt to create a linear and territorial construction that elides the complex interchange that exists within metaphor as a whole is a simplification that fails to reflect the interchange. Thus, this text will be using the term "foundational metaphor" to refer to both metaphors that underlie the text and the societies discussed.

confrontation of experiences" in the moment, each metaphorical moment working as a whole, despite the manner in which our position (existence in the material world) "appears to invite linearity" (288). The suggestion is that Le Guin's work not only makes use of metaphor, but mirrors and parallels the structures of metaphor in its suggestion that, despite our perspective which invites an assumption of linearity, our relationship with the unknown exists as a contingent whole embedded in a vast field of interconnected context rather than as a causal string of events. So, it is not that Le Guin suggests we cannot "know" any given fact (she offers many such "facts" in her traditionally structured stories); rather, in her choices and style, she places in question the value of limited and non-contextualized knowledge, while suggesting that all human knowledge is limited and non-contextualized. In other words, any "known" fact is surrounded by immeasurable influences, patterns and far-reaching effects, and acknowledgement of (consent to) those influences, patterns and effects is the only respectful – and sensible – position, making metaphor completely necessary in any interaction with said forces.

FINDING A STANCE

Unlike Samuel Delaney's radicalized form of storytelling in which narration is often decentralized and ambiguous, Le Guin's prose is usually told in fresh but recognizable story structure,[34] using that structure as a familiar passage that allows access to the profound alterity of her view. In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, despite the narrative's traditional form, the meaning is radical and that radical statement is

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[34] There are a few notable exceptions including *Always Coming Home* and *Searoad*.

founded in the structure of the metaphors which resist a synchronic reading or, as Paul Ricoeur notes in *The Rule of Metaphor*, structures that produce a "semantics of discourse" which "is not reducible to the semiotics of lexical entities" (76). With Genly Ai's statement on the opening page, that "truth is a matter of imagination" (1) combined with Le Guin's statement in the introduction that "[s]cience fiction is metaphor" (np),[35] Le Guin founds her claim that facts alone are of limited value in determining "truth." Thus, as imaginings are subject rather than object, facts fill only the non-variable position in the equation of resulting knowledge, and in terms of language, the position left as variable must often, if not always, be filled by metaphor. In other words, right from the outset with her statement on truth, Le Guin sets the tone of the text, creating the foundation of the relationship with the unknown that this text requires: that is, if one is to be successful in directed movement into the future, one must allow room for the hunch, the guess – i.e. the unknown – and synthesize that which one does know with what *may* be true or *may* occur, all while staying cognizant of the fact that one can never *know everything*; as such, living metaphor becomes a primary methodology.

As a narrative style in the genre of science fiction, Le Guin's approach offers respect for all sorts of relationships (the most important of which is respect for the unknown). Le Guin's is a position antithetical those claims to prophecy and tendency to militarism of SF discussed in the introduction, and her work was and

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[35] Science fiction has long been considered a genre in which the familiar is replaced by the possible, or as David Seed puts it, "an embodied thought experiment whereby aspects of our familiar reality are transformed or suspended" (2), and as such, exists as the most basic form of metaphor, Aristotle's interconnection of rhetoric and eikos (the possible) (Ricoeur, Rule, 10).

remains a profound change of direction: as Zina Petersen notes in her essay "Balancing Act: Ursula Kroeber Le Guin," in *The Left Hand of Darkness* "[a] concern with the balancing of difficult dualities replaced the drive for conquest as a theme" (66). Although Petersen is specifically referring to the text's discussion of interactions with the alien Other and the sociopolitical interactions of an alien society, both situations that Golden Age writers of Science Fiction consistently handled in their narratives by promoting aggressive or manipulative methods of control (see Asimov's *Foundation Trilogy* and Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, or later in Frank Herbert's *Dune*), Petersen's statement is equally valid in discussions concerning the dualism of the known and the unknown. The interactive and cohesive nature of the dualism is made clear in a consideration of the binary relationship of the two religions of Gethen (Karhide's Handarra and Orgoreyn's Yomeshta), and as well, through Le Guin's use of metaphor in that consideration. Although one springs from the other, the two religions are diametrically opposed in their relationship with the unknown in that the Handdara accepts and engages with the unknown and the unknowable and the Yomeshta deny the unknown and negate the unknowable. Although both play a part in the conception of Gethen's ontological constructs, of the two, the precepts of the Handdara are more central to the themes of the overall text.

According to the Handdara, to learn which questions are unanswerable and not to ask or answer them (70) is a necessary skill if attempts to negotiate a complex world are to be effective. This position reflects Ricoeur's discussion of the voluntary versus the involuntary, in which he notes, "[t]o explain means to move

from the complex to the simple" (*Freedom*, 4); thus, explanation requires the foreclosure of the unknown and points to Ricoeur's argument that consent is a necessary step in any act of will in order to avoid simplification of the complex or the unmanageable; in other words, one must consent to the lack of control that is inherent in the involuntary. According to Ricoeur, an act of will requires the recognition of what is unchangeable – the "absolutely involuntary" which occurs in "the form of character, of the unconscious, of biological life" (*Freedom*, 7) – and application of the voluntary by consenting to that which cannot be changed while continuing the act of will. For Ricoeur, this consent is the "terminus" to those acts of will (ibid). In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, the primary force requiring consent is the darkness or the unknown, and Estraven's relationship with that looming "space" is posited first and foremost in his consent to his inability to know.[36] That is, he knows which question should neither be asked nor answered, continuing his act of will in each case through engagement with the situation through metaphor because metaphor produces movement but does not require nor allow for the (false?) assurances or the apparent guarantees of the measurable.

In his essay "On Truth and Falsity in an Extra-Moral Sense," Nietzsche questions whether language is "the adequate expression of all realities" (3) and notes that in interacting with the world, one "forgets that the original metaphors of perception are metaphors, and takes them for the thing themselves" (4). In doing so,

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[36] Kenneth Roemer "suggests that unimaginability is an integral component of her [Le Guin's] utopian project" (Adams, 35), a statement that tips its hat to the unknowable and the unknown that inhabits many of Le Guin's text but is most directly engaged with in LHD despite the fact that the concept of utopia is only implicit and fragmentary within this work.

one loses track of one's position in relation to what is known and what can be known. Le Guin suggests that one must retain a firm conception of both, and as such, on metaphor, its forms and its effects. Only from such a position can one construct a functional relationship for the task of negotiating the world because from such ground, one can both act as if one knows enough to make a decision about the future (i.e. one can commit an action), while recognizing one's lack of knowledge (i.e. consenting to what is unknown). It is a fraught relationship that requires balance, balance that is constructed through metaphor. Because of metaphor's diachronic state (Derrida, White, 16), as a non-linear interconnection, it fills a "semantic lacuna" (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 52); thus, the act of metaphorizing is an ineluctable recognition of that space or gap, a recognition which requires a solid foundation from which to act – that is a well-founded comprehension of the ground on which one's knowledge or awareness of a lack thereof is based – a position that is exemplified in the mythology and wisdom of the Handdara in *The Left Hand of Darkness*.

Le Guin's own profoundly nuanced and respectful relationship with knowledge is best exemplified in her construction of the Handdara, in that, the religion, with its respect for and interactions with the unknown, takes part in a discourse which allows for recognition of the respective size and scope of the two fields: the known and the unknown. When Genly contemplates the efficacy of foretelling (the Handdara's accurate prediction of the future) as a means for mediating that future, Faxe responds by stating that foretelling, which seems so oppositional to the precepts of an order that espouses ignorance, is performed in

order "[t]o exhibit the perfect uselessness of knowing the answer to the wrong question" (70), suggesting that many if not any question without context and scope is the "wrong question." The idea is brought home in the tale of Lord Berosty's futile and tragic attempt to escape death through the foretellers (43).

Berosty's tale suggests foretelling is costly in a multiplicity of ways but that it is important because, although a question may or may not be answered, the choice to ask or not determines and defines one's relationship, not just with that which is unknowable (in the case of Berosty, the time of his death), but also with what is immediately significant, e.g. that which we are able to know (for Berosty, that his partner supports him). Highlighting the fact that what one knows is a very small part of a very large picture, most of which is beyond the scope of either a single individual or a national consciousness, the act of foretelling illustrates the fact that answers to questions about the future (through foretelling or any other means) are always too limited to act as a means by which to direct one's actions. Berosty's failure is in his refusal to "consent" – not just to death – but to the risk that is inherent in not knowing the time of that death. Returning to the conception of will in Ricoeur's text *Freedom and Nature*, as discussed in the introduction, the equation that underlies any action requires that consent: "To say 'I will' means first 'I decide,' secondly 'I move my body,' thirdly 'I consent' (ibid). Berosty's failure to consent to the unknown of the future results in his locking himself in a room and ending in madness and in the undirected and thus chaotic action of madness that is the antithesis of an act of will (he kills his lover who attempts to aid him) (Le Guin, LHD, 46). The answers, which are partial (as answers always are), leave him unable

to move and then drive him to madness and destructive action. Both the inability to act and the madness are rooted in the inescapable fact of the limitations of knowledge (as exemplified in the partial answers) and his refusal to accept – to consent to – the fact that all knowledge is partial. Berosty's relationship with knowledge defines and directs his actions and life, a fact that Le Guin suggests is a result in which all of Gethen shares, i.e. one that is reflected within both of Gethen's nations.

THE HANDDARA AND KARHIDE

The temperaments of Gethen's two largest countries are related to and reflected by the two primary religions such that each religion acts as both infrastructure to and metaphor for the community of which it is a part: the Handdara and the Yomeshta form an interconnected binary which defines the relationships of Gethenians with the unknown and acts as a foundational metaphor for the superstructures of the communities. To broaden the interaction of Berosty to the religion as a whole, one must consider the complex net of Handdaran practices:[37] most importantly that of an espousing of ignorance as fundamentally desirable and necessary to a functional relationship with the world and the Other. The Handdaratta practice an active awareness of ignorance enacted as the state which most perfectly reflects one's relationship with the world, within which they perform the practice of

[37] Many literary critics have linked the Handdara to Taoism because of Le Guin's interest in the religion, and there are certainly many similarities. Douglas Barbour compares Genly Ai's description of the Handdara as a "religion without institutions, without priests, without hierarchy . . ." (LHD, 55) to the Tao-te ching's description of Tao as "eluding and vague" and "deep and obscure" (Whole, 27). Certainly the similarities are notable, but my focus here is on the structure of the metaphor and as such I will not be focusing on the likely link between the religions.

"Presence" or the "untrance," a "self-loss (self-augmentation?) through extreme sensual receptiveness and awareness" (57) in order to access and determine that which *can be* known and thus imply the vast scope of that which is unknown and/or unknowable. As Genly comes to recognize, the "ignorance' prized by the Handdarata" that plays into "inactivity and non-interference" (60) not only underlies the religion but the attitudes of the nation as well: "Under the nation's politics and parades and passions runs an old darkness, passive, anarchic, silent, the fecund darkness of the Handdara" (60). It is worth noting that, despite its "passive" silence, Le Guin characterizes the "darkness" of the Handdara as "fecund" because rather than an empty void, the unknown is the source of everything – explainable or not. In fact, in using the term, Le Guin reorganizes a very old metaphor.

Darkness as a metaphor for danger, lack of knowledge, or loss is a figure that Hans Blumenberg would characterize as an "absolute metaphor" in that it acts as a foundation that is irreconcilable using strictly literal language, specifically using its partnered duality, light, as an example of an absolute metaphor, stating, "the metaphorics of light cannot be translated back into concepts" (7). Such is the backdrop to Derrida's discussion of the heliotrope, the metaphor that underlies all other metaphors, the metaphor for the sun which is "more than essential: it produces essence" (43). Christy Wampole calls such metaphors "root metaphor" in her text *Rootedness* (5), and Lakoff and Johnson refer to them as "metaphorical concepts" or conceptual metaphor (*Metaphors*, 10). Specific to darkness, Jason Haslam, in his discussion of *Tarzan of the Apes* and *In Darkest Africa*, suggests the foundational metaphor of darkness or blackness is a necessary backdrop to whiteness because it is

against darkness that whiteness stands out. As such, metaphorical darkness is a fraught term that figures in both racial and identity politics, and has been used to highlight whiteness, knowledge, and purity, or as Haslam puts it, the metaphorical understanding of darkness is partially constructed through "'whiteness' semiotic and performative reliance on the existence of blackness and the nonessential nature of the connection between economic privileges and whiteness" (*Gender*, 115). As such, metaphorical "darkness" has a full slate and a shady history; however, in using the word "fecund," Le Guin expands the metaphor in that she reorganizes our conceptions of darkness as a necessary and valuable (if risky) space, important to more than just our metaphorical conceptions of whiteness; while at the same time, she reorganizes our conceptions of metaphor itself.

The construction of Le Guin's metaphorical use of darkness calls into question conceptions surrounding the teleological and linear production of metaphor. Aa mentioned previously, according to Lakoff and Johnson metaphor is a fairly direct cause and effect construction: a "concept is metaphorically structured, the activity is metaphorically structured, and, consequently, the language is metaphorically structured" (ibid). Their use of the word "consequently" determines metaphor as a chronologically linear interaction with each stage as a product of the previous one, but Le Guin's metaphors call this simple equation into question. Although Le Guin's semantics *may* be a product of her conception (and even that position poses a question most writers could not answer), it is the reverse for us. It is the language – in this case the word "fecund" – that produces an alternative conception of darkness to that of the hegemonic norm, one that defamiliarizes an

assumption, transforming the *threat* to *risk*, and creates an alternative focalization that is filled with potential. In the process, the metaphor becomes diachronic and layered through time rather than synchronic and immediate, suggesting that Ricoeur's semic fields are more applicable than Lakoff and Johnson straightforward equation or even their more complex theory of entailments,[38] in that the image of those fields takes into account the layers of meaning, and the interconnected and multidirectional metaphorical approaches which include the possibility of multiple points coming into play simultaneously, creating various points of focalization,[39] many to do with still fillable and productive space ("fecund"). The imagery is useful, in that, by imagining the "field" rather than a linear cause and effect that is inescapable even in Lakoff and Johnson's more complex construction "metaphorical entailments," a concept which "characterize a coherent system of metaphorical concepts and a corresponding coherent system of metaphorical expressions for those concepts" (9), the interaction takes on and reflects the fluid complexity and multidirectional movements of a polysemic exchange that includes multiple agents. These multidirectional movements and simultaneous enactments of differing connotations inherent in metaphor introduce new predications, which transform from impertinent to pertinent and thus produce an "alteration in the language" (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 182) which in turn will produce an alteration in perception that can be returned

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[38] Lakoff and Johnson's theory of entailments is similar to Ricoeur's discussion of semic fields in that both underlie the metaphor. I prefer the complexity of the semic field in that the single unit of meaning – the seme – allows more movement and suggests field theory, rather than the more specific and thus more static statements that the pair use – "time is money," "time is valuable" – as examples of entailments (9), which in consequence limit range and require a more linear form.

[39] For example, if the seme beneath a metaphor is "consumption," without the context of a surrounding phrase, multiple meanings of the word – multiple points on the semic field – can come into play simultaneously creating a vast interconnected network of meaning.

to change the original interaction as receiver becomes transmitter, and vice versa. In other words, the imagery of semic fields disallows an obviously linear relationship, producing instead the suggestion of an interconnection that shifts and evolves with each usage and each user such that the source of each change is unclear and the interchange in constant motion.

As such, in this novel, the darkness – the unseen, the unknown – is a kind of partner to be used and worked with (and Le Guin's choice of the term "darkness" rather than "universe" or "cosmos" suggests a important lack of definition that any spacial metaphor with an automatic presumption of parameters and limits would not offer). In fact, much of the narrative deals with Estraven's (an adherent of the Handdara and thus an adept of the practices) interactions with the "darkness" or the unknown. His interactions are respectful but not particularly fearful and include an awareness of his vulnerability, but as well, an active courting of or interactive relationship with that unknown future, insisting that this is no unidirectional relationship. Specifically, he refers to dothe (Handdara super-strength) as the "strength out of the dark" (189), suggesting that although the Handdarata train in order to be able to access the attribute, and it is the body that pays the obvious cost in the thangen phase (79) (i.e. the trained body is a necessary receptacle) the source of dothe is both unknown and unknowable – i.e. "the darkness." Notably, to meet that potential one must prepare.

In preparing for dothe, the future changes as dothe is reached and the body's capabilities change and new potentials arise – all of which require a respectful realization of the inability to "know" the future even though one may be able to

foretell a single fact because dothe can only be reached by the Handdarata who has prepared, that is, has acted in such a way that the unknown future is now changed. As such, the Handdara is not a piecemeal religion but requires an interactive relationship between the adherent and the environment that includes practical material preparation and recognition of the unpredictable nature of the future (the unknown). In other words, dothe goes hand in hand with respect for the unknown; one must consent to the unknown's affect on the body to enact dothe. One must allow the unknown access to the self/body. This position that both takes into account and pays respect to the lack of control or understanding as to the source of dothe results in a relationship that is not based in possession; rather, as an indweller, one owns nothing but oneself, work is communal (Le Guin, LHD, 59) and as such, that self must be prepared to use what is to hand. The relationship between an adherent of the Handdara and the religion as a whole is an interconnected and integrated relationship which recognizes one's connections to the world, one's effect within that world, the existence of the unknown, and the risk associated with that unknown, and above all, one that accepts the costs of that association.

This central practice of the Handdara creates a constant awareness of the inescapable and uncontrollable nature of both the unknown and the unknowable, making most interactions with the "dark" similar to riding a great wave, that is, dangerous and temporary, but at the same time offering a perspective otherwise unavailable. The act of foretelling is directly centered on that relationship, acting as a materialized metaphor for the community's relationship with the future: answers to questions produced during the ceremony are characterized as "intolerable" light

that comes out of the “darkness” (66). The answers solve no problems (the light is “intolerable”) and come from an ephemeral and immaterial source, and the voyage is one that requires consent – as do all metaphors. As an act of predication – specifically fluid predication that moves from impertinent to pertinent, a position that is repeated with each new usage or with each semantic event and continues to happen with each new perception – living metaphor is an act of will and falls under the same construct as other acts of will; as such, consent is an unavoidable step. In terms of the material ceremony of foretelling, consent continues to be an ineluctable condition; not only are all positions in the foretelling circle filled only with volunteers, the weaver will ask no question until s/he has considered whether that question is answerable. When Genly asks what will happen if he asks an unanswerable question, Goss responds, “The Weaver will refuse it” (60). Consent of the participants is necessary, but so too is the consent of the group as a whole, as presented in the Weaver’s assessment and acceptance of any proffered question. In fact, the Weaver’s consent is an absolute requirement of the process, not merely because of some abstract idea to do with respect, but because the success of the process requires it. That requirement is made clear in the tale of the Lord of Shorth in which an unanswerable question was asked and the foretelling ended in a scene in which the Celibates were “catatonic, the Zanies were dead, the Pervert clubbed the Lord of Shorth to death with a stone,” and the Weaver – Meshe – left the Handdara to create a religion whose precepts are an exact reversal of the Handdara’s acceptance of the unknown and the unknowable, one which has created a totalitarian

government in which no foretelling exists (Le Guin, LHD, 60). As with all acts of will, in foretelling, consent is necessary to succeed.

As such, Le Guin's construction directly reflects Ricoeur's theory of will, but goes beyond, suggesting that consent is a necessary component of both the material act and the metaphor in foretelling, in that foretelling includes both an immediate action (the concrete) and an overall relationship with the future (the abstract), layering the two together in a material metaphor. In fact, one can parallel the idea of consent as a component of an act of will with a conception of the need for a question to be determined as answerable as a kind of consent from the darkness/the unknown, while maintaining an awareness that Le Guin's unknown is not an entity with intention. In fact, Le Guin's construction of the unknown specifically elides any personification or intentionality that would be suggested by a religion with a deity or a magical affiliation such as Christianity or transcendentalism. Rather, the Weaver's assessment of whether a question is answerable has more to do with a reading of the metaphorical "weather" and a following of the "hunch," a subject which will be dealt with in a later section of this chapter. But regardless of the source, without the Weaver/the unknown's consent, the process of foretelling fails; without consent the metaphor falls apart, and in that potential failure exists the need for consent from the object of the metaphor not just the transmitter and receiver. In other words, foretelling is a kind of metaphor in that it is what it is not – it sees a future without seeing the future, just as metaphor states the nature of an object without stating the name of the object itself – and only in the acceptance of the layered existence

implied by a combination of both acts does the information become accessible – and useful.

Another interconnection that defines the relationship between the world and the unknown lies in the repercussions of foretelling. Trips into the darkness are paid for at the cost of the body insisting on the intertwined and inescapable nature of the relationship between material and immaterial. The specific example of the ceremony of foretelling described in the novel takes place with a physician present and ends with him kneeling beside "the zanies, the frailest ones, the fuse-points" both of whom "lay huddled up on the floor. The Kemmerer lay with his head on Faxe's knees, breathing in gasps, still trembling" (66). The costs are heavy for the participants, and as noted earlier, the answers are useless except in that they define the only rational relationship possible with the unknown: a relationship that includes the recognition that the unknown is unavoidable, uncontrollable, and beyond encompassing (thus the impossibility of a deity). As such, the engagement is costly in the extreme, even more so for askers who fail to offer the respect and flexibility necessary to all interactions with the foretellers, as made clear in the tale of Berosty referenced earlier, in which a tragic death for both King and Kemmerer is the result of a failure to note that cost. Because the costs are heavy and the most visible ones are paid for in the material world (both in the immediate circumstances of the ceremony and as well, in the potentially changed life of the asker), it is easy to view the relationship as primarily founded in the material world, yet, the Handdarata (and Le Guin) suggests that a successful foretelling requires that one decentralize that material result. Rather than focusing on the question, "Is the material result worth

the material cost?", the crucial information is in the awareness that these material costs do not produce material gain; rather, the material costs of a successful foretelling result in the immaterial gain of a more balanced relationship with the unknown and the consequent improvement in the functionality of the recipient. All of which results in the following equation: the darkness is unknown and to a very large degree unknowable, and to pretend otherwise or refuse to acknowledge its relevance leads to a limited relationship with the world that is doomed to repression of self and others, as suggested in micro in the story of Berosty and in macro in the way the Yomeshta interact with the world.

MESHE AND ORGORYN

The Yomeshta, the other major religion on the planet, has sprung from the Handdara but takes what is ostensibly a directly oppositional view. The Yomeshta believe that Meshe, originally an adherent of the Handdara and a Weaver (the "filiament" (67) in the practice of foretelling), exists at "the center of time" and sees all (162), a belief that disavows the Handdara's value for ignorance which promotes a reflection of and respect for the immensity of the unknown and acts as recognition of the existence of the unknowable. There are a number of interesting precepts in the Yomeshta's conception of our relationship with knowledge, including the lack of a linear relationship with time, but for the purposes of this argument, the most important supposition embedded in this ideology is the foreclosure of the unknowable, for, as stated previously, Meshe sits in the center and "sees all." As

such, the universe becomes no larger than a human[40] as one individual can know – that is encompass – all. As with all ideologies, the relationship is not exclusive to the religion but rather, plays out in many interactions within the society, acting as a condensed and metaphorized version of the nation's social structures. Specifically, this placement of Meshe at the center is directly related to Orgoreyn's system of government because, as opposed to the Handdara, the Yomeshta, as monotheists, are a cult of a solid, knowable personality but also (perhaps in consequence) a system of hierarchy – thus, as there is a center and so there must be a margin,[41] and that theoretical margin translates into a marginalized population.

Ostensibly a communal format,[42] Orgoreyn's government is actually hierarchical and repressive, and is based on the control of knowledge, a position that is obviously a direct reflection of the precepts of the Yomeshta religion and is enacted in Genly's treatment, once he is recognized as an envoy, as compared to the other refugees (113). Peopled by inspectors and clerks, the government keeps track of everyone's movements, dictating those movements whenever the government deems it necessary, and practices thought-control by limiting information to the general populace. Certainly not devoid of metaphor, Orgoreyn's metaphors are

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[40] In Le Guin's Hainish series all planets have been seeded by Hain, and thus all are inhabited by one form of human or another. The various groups are in some cases radically different – as in the dual-sexuality of Gethen, which the text suggests has been a form of experimentation – but all are human.
[41] The resulting question the text seems to suggest is whether all religions with deities are hierarchical by nature in that they place a single being above others.
[42] Le Guin has on several occasions experimented with the idea of socialist/communist governments in her fiction, and more than one critic has noted the implicit commentary on the failed communist experiments extant in the mid-century including John Huntington's categorization of Orgoreyn government as "totalitarian-collectivist" that is even less successful than Karhide's feudal system because of its lack of "flexibility" (239). LHD's Orgoreyn is a particularly bleak version, but with the switch to anarchy in TD, the communal gains the particularity that Le Guin so values.

effaced and determinative metaphors that are dangerous because they simplify and elide rather than expand knowledge. As followers of Meshe, the Orgota seem to be creating a government that attempts to replicate Meshe's position, i.e. all information (knowledge) is kept available to the center (the government). However, a relationship with information (i.e. what can be known) is also a relationship with the unknown.

Orgoreyn's style of government – as well as its religion – suggests that through collection of information, one can know all, an attitude that is in direct opposition to Karhide's, whose mad king (all the kings of Karhide are mad [3]) inevitably stumbles under the pressure of trying to rule a people and a country while fully aware that the unknown is a primary variable in all outcomes.[43] Therefore, although Orgoreyn also seems to understand that, as Michel Foucault notes in *The History of Sexuality, Vol I*, power (and Foucault is referring to a multiplicity of powers – hegemonic, institutional, political) "comes from everywhere" (93), unlike the more passive (respectful?) Karhide who would add to that list the "darkness," the Commensals of Orgoreyn endeavor to encompass that "everywhere" in attempts to control their population through various methodologies, beginning with control of information. However, that information is collected in an attempt to implement other types of control, specifically through recent advancements in methodologies in control of the body, that is "knowledge regarding sex" (Foucault, *History*, 92) and

[43] It is also worth noting that the anxiety as to the scope of Karhide's situation may be one of the reasons the populace is vulnerable to the new move toward war, as well as the reason that the movement fails – although Tibe seems to be more in the style of an Orgoreyn schemer than a Karhide fatalist, as suggested by his implications that Genly is lying about his alien status (9) and his manipulation of the king in regard to Estraven.

the repression of sexuality in select populations because, as Foucault also notes, the "relationship between sex and power [exists] in terms of repression" (*History*, 6), a new and disturbing development on sexually free Gethen.[44]

In opposition, in Karhide, despite the brooding milieu that Genly notes in everything from the gossiwars' "disconsolate bellow" (3) to the "reddish gloom" of the throne room (31), historically there has been no attempt to control the population as a whole. Rather, despite feuds and disagreements, respect for the Other and the other's privacy is assumed as a norm, including an assumption that some information about the other will remain "unknown" and the Other's state is his or her own business. This assumption of privacy is reflected in the response of the village to Estraven's clear signal that he is an outlaw when Genly and he enter the small village after leaving the glacier: "One person might be outlawed in Karhide, another in Orgoreyn" (273). The villagers' response, that is, to accept the strangers at the hearth and to feed them, indicates the belief that privacy – the unknown state of the unknown other – must be accepted, much as any other unknown. All of this to say, the difference between the countries lay in their conception of the size of Foucault's "everywhere," just as that difference is reflected in the two countries conception of "all." Orgoreyn's everywhere is founded in collectible facts and repression of the movement, actions and state of the bodies of its citizens, whereas Karhide's conception of everywhere is so large it drives the kings mad but offers those who

44 Control over the field of sexuality occurs in Orgoreyn through the use of drugs to control Kemmer (Gethenian's sexually active state) in prisons populations. Like many repressive states that claim to have their citizen's best interest at heart, Oregoreyn makes changes within invisible populations.

accept the unavoidable relationship a less insular position from which to make decisions resulting in a more open society and a more generous community.

MADNESS AS AN UNKNOWN

Karhide's attitudes surrounding the madness of their kings are also a direct result of their relationship with the unknown. That the king is mad is an accepted fact to be discussed with no equivocation because, as Estraven makes clear in his discussion with Genly over dinner, some situations produce or require madness:

> Well, Mr. Ai, you're not insane. I'm not insane. But then neither of us is a king, you see . . . I forgot, being too interested myself, that he's a king, and does not see things rationally, but as a king. All I've told him means to him simply that his power is threatened, his kingdom is a dustmote in space. . . (17)

If one's existence as a king is circumscribed and determined by one's power, then the position requires a prioritization of that power to the exclusion of all else;[45] all of which, constitutes a madness that is both necessary to and the result of that relationship in which the single being is all, for "[m]adness is really a manifestation of the 'soul'. . . the unconscious part of the human mind" (Barchilon, viii). For King Argaven and all the kings of Karhide, such madness is inevitable when that "soul" (singular) is met by a paradoxical and thus irresolvable awareness of an infinite

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[45] This prioritization is the foundation of the King's response to Genly in that as Ronnie D. Lipschutz notes "[a]liens are regarded as a threatening presence, possessed of a drive or force that, if not stopped, will absorb, consume, or subvert and transform the body politic" (80). Although in this case the King seems more concerned with a change of scope – from one country of three to a country among 80 plus planets – that change of scope is frightening in its general transformative potential.

unknown (as must be in a Karhide based on the Handdara) that cannot exist according to a structure in which the king is "all," made worse yet because that "all" has continued to expand with the knowledge of the Ekumen. It is a paradox that constitutes the unavoidable nature of the King's madness under the Handdaran religion. However, if awareness of the unknown is paradoxical for the king, for the populace, the madness of the king is yet one more form of the unknown which can be recognized and accepted as all other forms of the unknown must be recognized and accepted, for "*[t]o explore madness we must renounce the convenience of terminal truths*" (Foucault, *Madness*, ix) and to exist within the unknown of the Handdara is to "[p]raise then darkness and Creation unfinished" (246). Unfinished Creation clearly presents a field the scope of which belies any conception of a "terminal truth," or an encompassing deity, and as such, requires a balance that must be handled through methodologies that recognize both positions within the paradox – that is –through metaphor.

Madness in Karhide, as in all populations, exists beyond the king (or any other authority figure) and throughout the society; the people of Karhide make room for madness, even going so far as to including the "mad" in active roles in the religion. Two of the positions in the circle of the foretellers are filled by the "zanies," the "time-dividers" (63), which Genly notes the Ekumen's research suggests means schizophrenics. Rather than categorizing the zanies as ill, that is creating a division "*which relegates Reason and Madness to one side or the other*" of the normal (Foucault, *Madness*, ix), and treating or institutionalizing them (as is certainly the case in Orgoreyn), in Karhide – and specifically within the Handdara –

the zany is a crucial segment of that central materialized metaphor/ceremony, foretelling. Their state is considered as alternate but not separate; in other words, in foretelling, madness exists as the "undifferentiated experience" that existed in the Middle Ages (Foucault, *Madness*, ix), and when Genly asks whether there is any "cure," Goss answers, "Cured? . . .Would you cure a singer of his voice?" (63). The metaphor suggests a community which sees no need to foreclose that which they do not understand. Rather, the response to this unfamiliar state is the same reaction offered to any unknown – acceptance and engagement – not unlike Estraven's calm response to the erratic nature of the king. Just as the relationship with the general unknown produces the interactions between individuals and communities that are more respectful and less repressive, in this specific case, in the interaction with the unknown that is madness, metaphor allows for enough interconnection to the familiar (we all use our voices) to allow the necessary space for and acceptance of the unknown that is madness. But the text also presents an example of a community which refuses an interconnected relationship with the unknown and thus with metaphor, resulting in a more repressive society.

SHIFGRETHOR AS METAPHOR

Orgoreyn's refusal to deal with the alternative and the different is reflected in the Orgota's interactions with language and the ancient social structure of shifgrethor, a structure of reputation/honor maintained and enacted through codes embedded within metaphor, subtext, and ceremony. For Karhide, shifgethor (an unmeasurable and necessarily metaphorical social construct) is the foundation of all

social and communal interaction, but in trying to solidify the known, the Commensals of Orgoreyn have moved away from shifgrethor in an attempt to lock down the known. As Estraven, in his first meeting with Oblse and Yegey, uses metaphor and analogy (partially through habit, partially in accordance with the rules of shifgrethor, and partially because the subject discussed is to some degree unformed and unmeasurable) to explain not-fully-formed theories and not-yet materialized fears about the newly militarized Karhide, Obsle – and later many other members of the Commensal – immediately waive shifgrethor (85) both allowing for and demanding clear and literal statement. Although Genly will later read their approach as a form of the transparency he longed for in Karhide until he finds he is mistaken when his seizure and arrest in the house of his "host" makes clear that the interactions have been anything but transparent, this refusal of metaphor and subtext is actually a loss of a field of exploration and depth of comprehension.

As such, one can consider it a loss of access to philosophy for, as Derrida states, "It [the literal] becomes metaphor when put in circulation in philosophical discourse" (9). In fact, philosophy is dependent on metaphor in that philosophy is engaged in discussion of the unmeasurable and the abstract and the loss of metaphor limits the discourse to the literal in its inability to address such unquantifiable and abstract subject matter. Thus, as Obsle and Yegey demand the material and the literal, the abstract and the philosophical fall away, resulting in the brutal pragmatism of the Orgoreyn state which deals with subjects as objects, each person becoming merely one body among a number of other bodies that must be given work, housed and fed, or, in the case of the noncompliant, imprisoned, drugged and

used as slave labor. Both communities suffer from losses produced by both the direct costs as well as the opportunity costs associated with their choice of system, and as Genly finds in his attempts to open diplomatic channels with first Karhide and then Orgoreyn, neither nation is fully functional; however, Le Guin makes clear that in the end, it is Karhide with its awareness and respect for the unknown and its willingness to incur/accept the risk inherent thereof *and* its consequent expertise in the use of metaphor, who will be able to face "the void" (32) that is space and alien life. Because that void is unimagined and unimaginable until brought to the planet's attention, Gethen's approach to this new idea requires metaphor in that it is metaphor that bridges the known and the unknown through an exploration and inhabiting of the relevant semic fields (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 240).

Ricoeur's approach to metaphor through layered and interconnected semic fields that underlie and combine multiple points of focalization in the material world to create a new response allows for comprehension of an idea that is either too large or too new to be dealt with in literal language, i.e. comprehension that allows the imaginer to go beyond the present moment, the present space. In the case of Karhide, whose practices incorporate the unknown and the unknowable, those semic fields are extended so that they can address an area beyond the empirical, material world because, as what is known lies within a greater expanse of what is unknown and unknowable, those semic fields must include or at least interconnect with those expanded spaces. As such, without an awareness of the unknown the field narrows, narrowing as well the options allowed to the community involved.

Within Orgoreyn's conception of a universe in which everything is knowable and everything is seen, combined with the limitations of a nation which up until the present moment has had no interaction with any life beyond the planet, there is no position which allows for anything as large as the Ekumen. Within Orgoreyn's belief that "Meshe sees all" (ibid) there exists the unspoken suggestion that there *can be nothing beyond what is seen* or that *nothing beyond what is seen can be relevant*. As a result, no one in Orgoreyn includes that which is beyond his/her own concerns in her/his consideration of any decision. In fact, the position creates an inability to own the act of decision making, as is made clear in Genly's interaction with the dying prisoner at Pulfen farm who dismisses Genly's tales of his own world with the response "Ah well . . .Ah well . . . We none of us choose" (183). It is a necessarily fatalistic view for a cog in a system rather than a person in a community, as Arya clearly views her/himself. But more importantly, in a political sense, Genly must be reduced and seen only as a single being rather than a representative, becoming a pawn of the commensals or the factions rather than an envoy from the unknown (the great unseen). Certainly, when a world and a universe is one in which one can know all, the size of that "all" counts, and thus, the expansion that occurs with the arrival of the Ekumen creates a universe that is no longer manageable and must be condensed or ignored. On the other hand is Karhide's attitudes in regard to the stranger, with its awareness of the unknown both as posited in the individual and source, which may be fraught and result in madness for some but also allows others to prepare to respond to the unimaginable.[46]

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[46] An argument that could be made for science fiction in general.

SELF, OTHER, (AND SHIFGRETHOR)

Although there are material representations of the unknown and the unimaginable everywhere in the text including the expanse of space and the fields of ice, Le Guin's most profound enigma is the unknown Other as presented in the differences between the Gethenian and the Terran. It is a difference that becomes an almost insurmountable stumbling block for Genly in his adherence to the standards of gender within which he was raised. Genly's fallibility is a new development in Le Guin's fiction or, as noted by Darko Suvin in his essay "Parables of De-alienation," it is the first time the central "stranger is shown as fallible" (265) rather than strictly heroic. In fact, Genly's failure to accept the differences between the two groups, which are myriad and immense despite the fact that they are not noticeable at a glance, almost ends the mission in failure. Regardless of all Genly's training as an envoy, without Estraven's experience as a Handdarata and his consequent willingness to face the unknown, the proposed relationship with the Ekumen would fail at the outset.

Superficially, Genly, a Terran, is only slightly different than the Gethenians, as Genly notes when he says that he has "never had any trouble passing as a native" (56), but the difference in sexuality – the two separate sexes in separate bodies of the Terran's vs the dual and ambi-sexuality of the Gethenians – creates a gulf for many on Gethen, (thus the references to Genly as "the pervert" [183]) but as well for Genly himself. For most of the text, Genly is unable to accept the duality, falling prey to what de Beauvoir would call ideas of the "Eternal Feminine" (1407),

characterizing women in general as inexplicable Others whose definition is determined by imposed standards, and specifically the female half of Estraven as irritating and untrustworthy, or non-existent.[47] When Estraven asks if women are like a different species, Genly's negative reply is unconvincing and ends in the statement "[i]n a sense, women are more alien than you are" continuing with "[w]ith you I share one sex, anyhow" (235), a statement that suggests that, to Genly, sex and gender are a nearly insurmountable and primary difference. Meanwhile at any sign from Estraven of the stereotypical behavior that Genly attributes to women, Genly becomes morose and suspicious: "at the table Estraven's performance had been womanly, all charm and tact and lack of substance, specious and adroit. Was it in fact perhaps this soft supple femininity that I disliked and distrusted in him?" (12).

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[47] The discussion of gender in LHD is a fraught one, which I can only touch on in this chapter. Amy M. Clarke notes that early feminists claimed Le Guin as making "sexist comments" (6), which one can only presume is a conflation of author and protagonist/narrator as those statements are made by Genly. Le Guin was also criticized for Genly's use of the male pronouns and nouns in his translation of discussions that must necessarily have taken place in the languages of Gethen; however, both choices (word and statement) are valid in that they produce character coherence and, through character coherence, plot. As a character driven writer, Le Guin describes her process in character creation as less rational and more instinctive, one in which "[t]he place is there, the person is there. I didn't invent him, I didn't make her up: he or she is there [sic]" (On Fantasy, 107) or as Bernard Selinger notes "inspiration for an artist often comes by means of an aural or visual image" quoting Le Guin as saying that a "book does not come tome as an idea, or a plot, or an event, or a society, or a message; it comes to me as a person" (52), and such "person"s must be coherent.

Although there is no question such a system will embed the writer's subjective position, such a system also requires that the character have autonomy in order to maintain coherence. As Lisa Hammond Rashley puts it, Genly "has a pronounced tendency to read these people through his own gendered lens as men or women, according to his own preconceptions" (23). Rashley goes on to note that Ai's presentation does affect the perception of the reader, but as a writer, knowing the way character driven writing works, my position remains that the choice is valid. There is no question that Genly, as we know him, would make those statements and apply the male pronoun. In terms of the presentation of the characters in largely male roles, it is a book largely about politics, and viewing politics as primarily a male position says more about the reader than the writer. Much of the criticism falls into an "I would have written a different book" form, a form that is highly suspect and less than reasonable in that it reflects George Steiner's statement that a model can never include all of (in his discussion) linguistic phenomena because "If it could, the model would be the world" (117). That said, as mentioned earlier, Le Guin herself has reassessed and adjusted her approach to work and her relationship with feminism, moving on to less traditional gender roles in later work (Clarke, 6).

For Genly, despite his desire and choice to approach the alien Other with respect, the more familiar Other – the female – is a threat; it is a paradox that Le Guin suggests is connected to a less exotic unknown – the unknown and uncontrollable within one's own home, that is, the metaphor that is the shared state of "I and thou" (Le Guin, 234) – a conundrum that is met in many societies through the codification of social intercourse, in the case of Gethen, through shifgrethor.

Genly's refusal to accept the unknown that is posited in the female side of the Gethenians (not to mention his negative response to his version of the "Eternal Feminine") is also reflected in his struggle with shifgrethor. The complex system of reputation and protocol characterized as one's "shadow" is a sublimated form of competition, and thus, could also, according to Genly's view, be considered feminine. So, despite Estraven's commitment to the Ekumen's attempts to make contact, and thus his commitment to Genly, until Genly is finally able to acknowledge the unknown female in Estraven, to see what he by his own admission "had always been afraid to see and had pretended not to see" (248), the interaction is limited and the chance of success compromised. Genly's refusal to deal with the implicit that is the feminine and his frustration with shifgrethor – for him, an alternate form of the unknown – suggests a failure in his own relationship with the unknown and is, consequently, a continuous stumbling block as it produces his distrust, skewing his reading of situations and motives. His failure to read others is particularly problematic in his only ally, Estraven, who eventually says, "It is strange. I am the only man in all Gethen that has trusted you entirely, and I am the only man in Gethen that you have refused to trust" (199). The distrust that Estraven

refers to is a result of the close contact that has resulted from Estraven's attempts to assist Genly and has made it impossible for Genly to entirely ignore the feminine in Estraven that he so distrusts, amplifying Genly's negative and biased response.

It is only through facing and accepting the unknown, that is in this case the feminine in Estraven, that Genly is fully able to work effectively with Estraven – i.e. cross the Gobrin, a materialized metaphor that stands for the unknown in the text. It is a relationship that James Bittner claims is shared by Le Guin herself in that "by moving away from herself to an aesthetic distance" she "gets at the truth" while "Ai himself, can survive and exist only in a cooperative relationship with a 'Thou' (111) – all of which positions are a move into the unknown. In other words, only on the ice can Genly "learn to treat difference as a resource" and recognize his own need to develop rather than acting as a teacher/purveyor of civilization (Inayatullah, 58), an ability Naeem Inayatullah notes is lacking in any colonizing force.[48] The Ekumen is a force which always waits to be invited, and for the Ekumen to be successful, Genly must step into that unknown to make the discovery he makes on the ice: "Alone, I cannot change your world. But I can be changed by it" (LHD, 259). As such, the suggestion is that for Genly to face the general unknown, he must first face the unknown that lies closest: himself, specifically his relationship with gender. Consideration of self is an idea that will be discussed further in chapter two – but it

[48] Inayatullah's discussion of colonialization in Star Trek and the shift from imposition to proposition in the first contact attempts of the series is interesting in its relation to the way the Ekumen advances any contact and notes the inevitable costs of that contact. Inayatullah's discussion of the pronounced shift to proposition in the second Star Trek series links the change with Todorov's discussion of consent, a requirement that is also represented in Le Guin's Ekumen and – of course – Le Guin's relationship with metaphor: that consent is a mandatory step that cannot be ignored or removed.

is also relevant in direct connection with Genly's overall relationship with the unknown and the results of his failure to be fully accountable.

Just as in Genly's dislike of the lack of transparency in Karhide, a preference that seduces him and causes his imprisonment in Orgoreyn, Genly's refusal to view Estaven as ambiguous, as a combination of genders, and as a fluid identity is a refusal of the risk that is inherent in the unknown and is encompassed in the variability and unpredictability of each next moment. Genly's unspoken demand that everyone must have a gender if they are to be trusted – and specifically a gender he understands and can predict – is a familiar position that theorists working in Queer Theory and Gender Studies have attempted to address in the past decades in both their discussion of the performative statements and hegemonic sources behind the determinative categorizations and the need for fluid spaces in which change can occur. The demand for determinative categorizations of gender in order to interact with the other is broached in Judith Butler's discussions of the ways in which drag expands those categorizations and the need to accept the risk inherent in that fluid state in order to move forward. Butler argues that drag disallows the requirement of static and determining categorizations for human behavior and socially normative roles in its production of gender as an imitative act: "It [drag] is a production which, in effect – that is, in its effect – postures as an imitation. This perpetual displacement constitutes a fluidity of identities that suggest an openness to resignification and recontextualization" (188).[49] It is just such fluidity that is

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[49] Discussions of Queer Theory and Feminist studies as reflected in Le Guin's oeuvre, including LHD, will continue in Chapter 3.

disturbing to Genly, and the resulting unpredictability that creates his distrust of the one person who is entirely devoted to his attempt, and it is only in accepting that unknown within Estraven, "[a]cceptance of him as he was," that the two are able to work in the full accord necessary to complete the trip successfully: "it was only from that sexual tension between us, admitted now and understood . . . that the great and sudden assurance of friendship between us rose: a friendship so much needed by us both" (248), a position that, as Selinger puts it, allows them to be "[i]solated and together" (52). This team of two, who just barely make it off the glacier, is founded in a clear recognition of what cannot be entirely known (thus the continuing isolation in their state of togetherness) and consent to that limited state of knowledge.[50] What cannot be known exists as a difference within the Other that requires engagement with a specific, a particular, Other in order that connection be made – that metaphorical and necessary bridge – and the need for the continuation of metaphor in connecting the particular to the general. It is through metaphor that Genly's connection to Estraven is converted to a connection to Gethen: his metaphorical position as "messenger-boy" allows him to span that gap and allows for the comprehension of the Ekumen as a "body mystic" rather than a "body politic" (259) beginning with the unmeasurable nature of love and friendship. Their success is profound and poignant, but facing the unknown is a continuous process, and even Estraven, who has faced it many times, struggles with the scope of what is required in order to fully commit to this interaction.

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[50] Thomas J. Remington notes that "[n]o deep relationships develop from the involuntary contact in the van" (164) when Genly is on his way to Pulfen Farm, suggesting that the lack of consent creates a lack of meaningful contact.

THE SELF AND THE WORLD

Of all the characters in the text and all the inhabitants of Gethen, Estraven is the one who is "ready" to face the unknown when Genly arrives, as Genly himself finally recognizes (203), and such readiness is a result of Estraven's relationship with the unknown and unknowable – and thus – with metaphor. Although speaking of material response to a moment, Genly's comment that he "never knew a person who reacted so wholly and rapidly to a changed situation as Estraven" (203) is indicative of Estraven's relationship with the unknown future as much as the known moment to which he is responding. This relationship is best presented in his characterization of himself as "stupid" under threat (76) and "slow-thinking" (203), which would seem in anyone else false modesty or, alternatively, paradoxical when considering his quick responses. After all, how can anyone as astute and direct as Estraven misjudge himself in terms of this one attribute? However, the answer lies in understanding the terms of the comparison. For the statement to make sense, Estraven cannot be comparing himself to other people,[51] so he must be comparing himself to the speed and complexity of unfolding situations. His statement that he is slow only makes sense as compared to the immediate need to understand and act; from this perspective, Estraven's attitude is indicative of his relationship with the

[51] Estraven does originally compare himself to others saying, "Some rise to present danger" continuing with "but I grow stupid and sit on a bag" (76). I would argue (as Estraven comes to a plan to continue his action within a few moments in that scene) that in sitting on that bag, he is taking time for a reassessment. The argument above holds true, as consistent action suggests Estraven is anything but non-responsive, and when considering his own characterization of his relationship with foreknowledge and luck on page 189 when he refers to his ability to know when "the great wheel gives to a touch." His sensitivity to the moment – that is "the great wheel" – suggests a moment to moment connection to the material world as discussed on the next page.

unknown. As opposed to the Orgoreynians – who ignore the unknown, Argaven – who fears it, and Genly – who trains in order to be able to approach it, Estraven chases after the unknown trying to catch up. In consequence, he is breathtakingly successful in his attempts. In his chase, he depends on the hunch, i.e. how his "luck" is "running" (203):

> I never had a gift but one, to know when the great wheel gives to a touch, to know and act [. . .] A great delight it was to feel that certainty again, to know that I could steer my fortune and the world's chance like a bobsled down the steep, and dangerous hour. (189)

Estraven's metaphorical description of what it means to be able to respond to the hunch can be considered as a non-mystical sensitivity to the material world. If one is observant, every moment offers new information that can direct one's actions, but Le Guin/Estraven writes/speaks of the trait as if it is more ephemeral and immaterial, a wise choice considering the direction and the results the two national attitudes suggests.

The two oppositional relationships with the unknown espoused by Gethen's dominant nations construct the day to day lives of their inhabitants. Consider, if one regards the ability to recognize the moment for what it offers through observation (admittedly a very acute form), then all knowledge is knowable – and useable – a position that resembles Orgoreyn's limited and clumsy efforts to know all facts and data regarding citizens.[52] However, Karhide takes a different approach for good

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[52] Aida A. Hozic's discussion of Tardovsky's film *Stalker* as a consideration of the relationship between "The Zone" as a necessary "extra-juridical space" (128) and the controlled world is relevant to Orgoreyn's attempts to control information. Although Hozic is most interested in the effects of

reason; Estraven's comment about how the "great wheel gives to a touch" implies the need for respect for unknown forces (including the apparently non-cognitive consideration of a situation – his taking time to stupidly "sit on a bag" [76]) and a willingness to accept the limitations of one's control in situations over which one has little influence. His reference to the "wheel that gives to a touch" suggests the manner in which a captain must maneuver a boat within the forces that are the currents of a huge body of water, a series of action dependent on information comprised of only a glimpse of a very limited portion of a situation. As such, even if given all the information about all the changing variables of that body of water including moment to moment changes in the windspeed, temperature, currents, etc. one would have to be able to sort and synthesize all the possible outcomes – an impossible task for a human, and likely even for AI unless we deem AI as godlike in capability. Donald Theall notes in his essay "The Art of Social-Science Fiction" that the Foretellers answers "do not cover enough of the future contingencies" (259), so Estraven's relationship with the world reflects the lesson of the foretellers: that one cannot know or sort all of the information even if it were available, suggesting that not all knowledge is knowable if to know is to comprehend, and thus, metaphor becomes the mode by which the information must be accessed.

The Zone on sovereignty, she makes the point that The Zone is a space in which "order has been suspended. Neither chaotic nor idyllic, zones – paradoxically – do not abolish or challenge the law but affirm it" (130). As such, recognition of the different spaces is important, and Estraven and the Handdara differ from the Orgoreyn and the Yomeshta in their recognition of The Zone/the unknown, as reflected in Faxes statement that "the only thing that makes life possible is permanent, intolerable, uncertainty" (71). In Orgoreyn's refusal of the unknown (Meshe sees all), it fails to recognize its position within the very structures that underpin its world, seeing only the ordered world within the bubble of civilization, and thus, when those structures change, the commensals cannot adjust to changing circumstances. Thus, The Zone is a material metaphor that represents the unknown that makes life possible.

As such, Estraven's Handdara style approach, including a metaphorical style of comprehension of the need for that light touch that allows him to steer the "world's chance" like "a bobsled" on a steep track, reminds us of our limitations, that we cannot know all of any situation even if those facts could theoretically be "known," that we are not brokers of power or masters of the universe, that our influence is slight but at times determinative, and must be accessed at the speed at which a situation changes. In fact, without a respect for the unknown and a comprehension of a need for metaphor to access that unknown, we are like the Commensals of Orgoreyn who leave shifgrethor behind while they jockey for position always at the cost of others and misread situations such that, in the end, the least that happens is sending innocents to their deaths to preserve a modicum of power. The irony and limitation of this view is made particularly clear when Genly – *the envoy of the Ekumen* – is sent to Pulefen Farm to preserve the power of the Commensal's and protect the shifgrethor of Orgoreyn (184), power that is, in fact, only at risk because of a loss of personal shifgrethor produced by the games of cloak and dagger the commensal's play at to enhance personal power. As such, Orgoreyn's system elides the complex nature of knowledge and can succeed only in the most limited of ways within a sealed system. After all, if one desires to control all knowledge, that knowledge must have a finite "mass" that can be encompassed by the parameters of a human brain. Estraven does not presume that capability and is successful because of his constant awareness of his limited access and control. That said, even Estraven struggles to characterize the unknown – or as he calls it –

"the dark" (189) and in consequence, always resorts to (living) metaphor in his attempts to discuss that which is unknowable.

Estraven uses figurative language in his references to the unknown in order to both create and characterize his relationship with a complex world. According to I. A. Richards figurative language changes how the world is "perceived and conceived" (Abrams on Richards, 163), and thus, acts as a performative agent in the conception/production of that world through words, but as well, as an access point to the unknown or the not yet extant. In other words, in its very existence, figurative language is an acknowledgement of the unknown, a tip of the hat to those invisible relationships which cannot be fully accessed through a consideration of fact and literal wording. A.S. Byatt translates Foucault as saying, "To name is simultaneously so give the verbal representation of a representation and to place that representation in an overall picture" (17). This linkage from signifier of the material to the idea of the material to the idea of a position that structures our relationship with the material is already a slippery and treacherous business – already metaphorical – in the most basic, the most Nietzschean, sense (a word is not an object or an act). So, where does figurative language fit into an already fraught relationship?

In fact, the choice to use language less secure and literally exact when the use of language is already inexact, already a "truth" only in the "fact that man forgets himself as subject, and what is more as an artistically creating subject" (Nietzsche, 8) who claims the material fact for what is actually a metaphor – i.e. a signifying word – and suggests both extreme courage and a need/attempt to reach other types of

comprehension and/or knowledge. Thus, the use of and need for the figurative must communicate the existence of other information than does literal language, or it would not exist. In the case of Estraven, whose success is based in a hyperawareness of his position in relation to the world and the Other,[53] in order to discuss his relationship with a complex and unknowable world, he necessarily speaks of wheels and bobsleds, *extending*[54] the language through metaphor, just as, through Genly, Le Guin equates facts with pearls (1), stating that neither is "solid, coherent, round . . . But both are sensitive" (1) in an attempt to remember that one is Neitzsche's "artistically creating subject" (ibid) and thus perspective, word choice, and a nearly infinite number of variables can change both the transmission and the reception of a metaphor. As with all figurative language, Le Guin's metaphor is an arguable statement because there are no tangible facts to which to point and instead only a recognition of resonance and a reach beyond the known; all of which suggests that all figurative language requires precision and courage in the speaker's attempt to cross the gap between minds by means of a resonating image and the "misuse" of language. It is a method which Estraven attempts over and over again, with courage and aplomb and a fair amount of success; however, even Estraven falls into fear when faced with the unexpected cost of communication from an abject state.

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[53] In Robert Galbreath's essay, "Le Guin's use of the Occult" he notes that Le Guin's dislike of the occult seems to be based not in the unexplainable but in occultism "as the organizational equivalent of a church that *mystifies* its adherents" (37 emphasis mine). This dislike of mystification is a central precept of the characterization of Estraven and his ability to sort and place himself and his surroundings while leaving room for the "mystic". Thus her dislike of the occult does not elide the existence of the unknown.

[54] This extension will be called into question at the end of the chapter, but for now the term is necessary.

THE SELF AS UNKNOWN

Paraverbal speech is the primary gift that the Ekumen brings to Gethen, but the unfamiliar skill is, for Estraven, a gift that is profound yet horrible in that the process breaches the boundaries of his subjective state, a boundary that he has never considered as vulnerable. Estraven's response mirrors Julia Kristeva's concepts in her text *Powers of Horror*, or, as Dino Felluga summarizes Kristeva, "the abject refers to the human reaction [. . .] to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between subject and object or between self and other" (n.p.). When Estraven is faced with Genly's call through the voice of his (Estraven's) dead brother within his own head, the breakdown of boundaries creates a liminal position he has never imagined: "'This is more terrible than I had thought.' He shook his head, as a man will do to shake off a nightmare, and then put his face in his hands" (253). The whole that is created through the specular I in Lacan's mirror stage is no longer the "fortress" with its "inner arena and enclosure" (Lacan, 1288); rather, that sense of wholeness has become disorganized, and he has been presented with "his own body and ego as most precious non-objects" yet now "they are no longer seen in their own right but forfeited, abject" (Kristeva, 5). Up until this point, although Estraven has courageously faced the unknown, he has done so as a complete and separate whole, i.e. a subject that is distinct from the objects it considers;[55] paraverbal speech changes his relationship with that unknown as it calls

[55] Frederic Jameson's discussion of the dissolution of self in his essay "World Reduction in Le Guin" is interesting here as he notes that "[h]eat is . . . conveyed as a kind of dissolution of the body into the outside world, a loss of that clean separation from clothes and external objects that gives you your autonomy" (2); as such, it is worth considering if Gethen's cold environment has created Estraven's pronounced independence.

into question his “self” as contained and impenetrable. That self has been the foundation from which he has managed his relationship with the unknown by extending his conception of the world from what is knowable – i.e. himself and his position. Now, with paraverbal speech, the self he has counted on his whole life loses shape and becomes permeable. In other words, in dealing with the alternate language of mindspeak, he is attempting “to step outside [his] own skin of consciousness, a vital cover more intimately enfolding, more close-woven to human identity than is the skin of our body” which, as George Steiner describes, “mediate thought about language” (115), and in doing so, Estraven runs the risk of loss of self.

In Merleau-Ponty’s discussion of the cogito, he writes that “transactions between the subject and the objects around about it are possible only provided that the subject first of all causes them to exist for itself, actually arranges them round about itself, and extracts them from its own core” (169); when Estraven faces “mindspeech,” the distinction between the subject and object is breached and thus Merleau-Ponty’s “arrangement” is no longer valid. If one arrangement of the structure of metaphor can be (and often is) viewed as using the material object as a point from which to extend in order to communicate the immaterial and the unmeasurable, then Estraven has used his separate and impermeable self as a foundation from which to address the darkness. The fact that, faced by this vulnerable and less distinct self, Estraven is still able to overcome his horror and step past that threshold on the basis of a now unrecognizable position and self to continue his commitment in the face of his abject terror, is in part a statement of just how profoundly his carefully constructed relationship with the unknown serves him and

his world, for this is an unknown that invades even the self. However, that ability also hints at the fact of an extant unknown and immaterial state which requires and acts as source to the figurative language necessary for any interaction that is not merely an extension of the material thus decentering the material as source for metaphor. In fact, Estraven's training must be profound and effective, but as well, based in more than an ability to extend from the recognizable, in that he is willing to allow the invasion and will not turn away from the awareness of an unrecognizable and immaterial unknown that has been brought to his attention despite the failure of himself as subject. In doing so, he is able to allow contact to occur – to offer the necessary consent – but only because his relationship with the unknown includes his position within what can be known, a realization of the limitations of that known, and an ability to recognize the existence of an unknown immaterial state that can only be accessed through alternative language – that is, metaphor.

In other words, through Estraven's relationship with his abject self, Le Guin has opened an ongoing discussion and her most radical suggestion about metaphor. It is in the interconnection and limitations of the known and the unknown, the material and the immaterial, the provable and the unprovable that Le Guin shakes the ideas at the very base of our conceptions of the way metaphor is structured. In Estraven's methodologies in dealing with the unknown, the "known" is shown up for what it actually is – a highly subjective, unstable perception rather than a solid, knowable fact: or as Merleau-Ponty puts it, "I can know nothing of this factual existence" (168). In preparing for their trip over the ice, Estraven uses his past experiences to determine just how much food and what tools and supplies will offer

the pair the best odds in crossing the ice, but even with all his expertise, when Genly asks whether they will succeed, Estraven can only answer, “I think so, with luck” (201). Although, Genly takes this statement for an assurance of success (after all, everything that Estraven has predicted thus far has come to pass), Estraven means exactly what he says. In Le Guin’s/Estraven’s unknown there is no magical shortcut; there is no intentioned deity to which to turn; there is only one’s recognition of what one can know (and a recognition of the subjective and unstable nature of that information) and what one cannot, and the speed and accuracy such knowledge lends the subject. In other words, there is the hunch. Estraven’s response and interactions in planning the trip are examples of what Genly calls Gethen’s skill in having “tamed and trained the hunch” (203) but not in increasing “its certainty” (204) – and note that the hunch is not categorized as thought with its necessary inclusion of “self-consciousness” (Merleau-Ponty, 170). Rather than a promise, the taming of the hunch as figured in both Estraven’s guesses and in foretelling is “the power of seeing *everything at once*” (204) as it exists *in the given moment* – but the position from which everything is seen is not thought and the subject is not the center, it is merely the position at which one stands at that moment. As such, in its connection to the future, it is a metaphor.

Even in the work of some of the most radical theorist dealing with metaphor, the language surrounding the figure consistently suggests that metaphor is centered on and produced by the material. Monroe Beardsley writes that “[w]hen a predicate is metaphorically adjoined to a subject, the predicate loses it[s] [sic] ordinary *extension*” (74, emphasis mine); Lakoff and Johnson’s use of that “consequently” in

their step by step representation of the structure of metaphor discussed earlier (ibid) is even more demanding of an unequivocal position on the material world as source of figurative language. Even in Derrida's radicalized discussion of metaphor "White Mythology," he too uses language that suggests metaphor is created from the material world as source, that it is "an eruptive *extension* of a sign proper" (Derrida, 57 emphasis mine). The exceptions lie in *Models and Metaphor* in which Max Black does move in the direction of Le Guin's style of metaphor in his statement that "metaphor creates the similarity" (37) continuing the ambiguity with his conclusion that "common characteristics" act as "ground of the metaphor" (39) which at least suggests a shared source, and of course, Ricoeur's discussion of impertinence presupposes a pertinence we cannot yet see.

The discussion is a difficult one because literal language is constructed in relation to the material world and as such we make associated assumptions about language in general, but if we add in Merleau-Ponty's work in phenomenology in which he characterizes the combined body and mind as a "subject committed to the world" (1962:viii) noting that the subject is "never simply object nor simply subject" (Grosz on MP, 87), he suggests an interconnection between mind and body as a "condition and context through which I am able to have a relation to objects" a condition that is both "immanent and transcendent" (Grosz on MP, 86). If we apply those transcendent relationships to metaphor, we can restructure the relationship. With the addition of Merleau-Pontuy's necessary extension of the subject in order to interact with all exterior elements to our discussion of metaphor, and if we extend to the immaterial (in what is admittedly a slight "misuse" of Merleau-Ponty's work) we

can see that extended subject as an extension that could bridge the material and the immaterial with both acting as source in an interchange that produces a new predication. Le Guin's work suggests such an extension (another form of her "complex holism"? [ibid]) reorganizing the subject such that the individual becomes less central and as well less hierarchically valued. In other words, with Merleau-Ponty's statement that the body is "the general instrument of my 'comprehension'" (235) the material becomes an important but incidental center rather than a center that indicates hierarchical value.

As such, Le Guin's use of metaphor in constructing Estraven's interactions with the unknown from an abject state gestures to a position much of the language around the theory of metaphor overlooks but Merleau-Ponty's construction of our mind/bodies as tool and position parallels, that is, our situatedness within the relationships produced in metaphor. So, when Estraven becomes aware of a heretofore unconceived and profoundly unfamiliar situation and is consequently unable to position himself, he is still able to respond to the situation because he is a tool rather than the center, and his response is founded in figurative language that is founded in the immaterial rather than from an expansion of what is already familiar. In other words, what Le Guin's work suggests is that the source of the metaphor is not the subject and the subjects known, but instead it is the whole, including the unfamiliar/the unknown, that acts as generator.

Words create the world. As Martin Bickman notes, many writers have suggested that the world is "created primarily by language" (46). Obviously Le

Guin's words create the world of Gethen, but as well, Estraven's figurative words create his profoundly functional relationship with the unknown to the point that even in a state of abject terror – a state in which he is no longer centered on the self – he can consent to that state and move in his chosen direction with only a hunch to guide him. In doing so, he must rely on that relationship with the unknown to create the necessary metaphors. It is important to note that the word that is most relevant in creating Le Guin's/Estraven's world is respect. It is respect for Estraven that allows Genly to move past his preconceptions, and respect for the unknown that allows Estraven to continue on a most exhilarating but terrifying course. As such, Le Guin suggests the relationship between words and respect is a particularly vital one – that to move into the future with an Other requires a form of Hegelian third stage recognition that incorporates respectful interactions with that Other, consent and acknowledgement of that Other, if we are to reach that imagined but unknown future which Le Guin notes, must always exists as a metaphor because "truth is a matter of the imagination" (n.p., Le Guin, Introduction). We must be able to imagine ourselves and that Other living together in that unknown future in order to have any future at all. As such, this discussion of the unknown must act as the opening foray in the discussions of the following chapters, each of which presents a particular version of those more familiar unknown states.

Chapter Two

Only Means: Governance and Metaphor in *The Dispossessed*

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

Ursula K. Le Guin's relationship with metaphor is one that has been consciously constructed and results in the way metaphor permeates her texts and acts as a foundation for that text and the resulting themes. In particular, in the case of *The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia*, it is through metaphor that Le Guin outlines the relationship between ownership and time, a relationship that insists on anarchy/utopia as a "malleable and elastic concept" (Greene, 2).[56] In the case of *The Dispossessed*, a text that centers on a planet/state in which the concept of property is illegitimate, that relationship results in a *situation* that cannot be owned as the very precepts of the state resist stasis and control on every level, creating a conception of a utopia that must be reinvented in each moment of its existence. To do so, *The Dispossessed* begins unapologetically with a metaphor because for Le Guin, metaphor constructs our relationship with the abstract, and thus, in order to avoid

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[56] Le Guin's relationship with anarchy is equally interesting, in that she claims it as "the most idealistic, and to me the most interesting, of all political theories" (The Day, 285).

becoming a form of limitation – an effaced and thus rigid force in the world – metaphor must exist in a fluid state that includes informed consent. For, even if the metaphor itself does not change, our relationship with it must as the context surrounding the metaphor shifts and adjusts. Thus, *The Dispossessed* is the tale of a utopia, but, as the subtitle states, only an ambiguous one as many of the inhabitants of that utopia struggle to enshrine, standardize, and systematize their own version of what is utopic – thus converting utopia to dystopia in that single act. As such, we are immediately presented with the polarized relationship that acts as a lynch pin for much of science fiction: the move between utopia and dystopia, or the problem inherent in More's construction of utopia as a commitment "to the common good" based on "the sharing of everything" (Miller, xviii) when such a society is in fact a community of subjects with subjective desires.

UTOPIA AND STASIS

In Le Guin's text, the utopian community spends much of its time claiming that the material components of the metaphorical constructs that surround its ideology do not exist in order to be able to insist that the resulting relationships are universal within the ideology and determined by a set of simple rules that are easily followed. The result of this claim is stasis, a state that Philip E. Smith, in his discussion of Kropotkin's work and its influence on Le Guin, notes is one that both writers' texts decry, stating, "both Kropotkin and Le Guin agree that their [anarchic] societies must never become static" (84). In the case of *The Dispossessed*, that static state is one that exists as a frozen form of a series of single subjective conceptions of

what is utopic.[57] Such a state of being calls into question whether the anarchic utopia of Anarres is a utopia at all. In fact, as Darko Suvin has noted, "Interests and values decisively shape all perception: it was Marx's great insight that no theory or method can be understood without the practice of social groups to which it corresponds" (Circumstances, 536). In other words, context is necessary in that it allows us to recognize that in identifying the results of the actions of the community as a whole as well as those of specific individuals one can recognize the likely motivations of such actions and realize that the universality many inhabitants of Anarres claim for the rules determining their behavior does not exist as separate from the act or the actor. In fact, rather than the rule as a producer of universality, those rules are metaphorical extensions that *create subjectivity* and deny the very universality they claim. As each subject advances their subjective act, regardless of any expansion of that act into a general rule, the possibility of a universal truth drops away – not to deny the possibility of utopia – but to suggest that each moment in utopia is both subjective and in need of constant re-creation by the subject. So, in constructing her "Ambiguous Utopia," Le Guin makes note of the need to "preserve a dynamic of continual social change" (Smith, 84) and insists that even the most compromised attempts at utopia must be created as stratified temporal landscapes – moments and timelines that exist simultaneously – and ones that must be understood as engagements in metaphor.

[57] It is the idea of a frozen utopia in stasis that Donna R. White suggests allows for criticism of the critics who follow in her discussion of Bulent Somay's "Toward an Open Ended Utopia."

Utopia has been a staple in SF[58] for as long as the genre has been recognized, with a false utopia built into what some consider the first text, H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine.*[59] That said, it is a conception that has waxed and waned as one writer after the next found the potentially insurmountable stumbling blocks, including that multiplicity of subjects and the resulting subjectivity within each imagined utopian community that limits and becomes rigid shifting utopia to dystopia almost from the moment of inception. Even assuming the possibility of overcoming the subjective nature of utopia, the great problem with utopia – stasis – is still extant because, as Naomi Jacobs puts it, "Utopia was once quantifiable, material, and inorganic, its superiority could be *seen*, in the symmetry and clarity with which it imitated an elegantly balanced and stable divine creation" (Beyond, 109). But of course, that symmetry is dependent on stasis, as made clear in Jacob's later comparison to da Vinci's human figure within a circle, noting that "we can see both the lovely symmetries of the classical ideal and its ultimate falseness," ending with "This is not a figure in movement" (109). It is within that missing movement that utopia must exist if it is not to become dystopia.

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[58] Concepts of Utopia have existed for centuries and have long been considered both an element of SF and a separate genre that exists under categorization of Utopian Studies. In Donna R. White's incredibly useful text *Dancing with Dragons: Ursula K. Le Guin and the Critics*, she notes the different opinions as to which is the precursor to the other and that the "middle-of-the-road opinion is that some utopias are science fiction and some are not, depending on whether or not the work incorporates scientific progress or is set in the future" (82). Jane L. Donawerth and Carol A. Kolmerten also discuss the "overlap" in "the notions of utopia, science fiction, and fantasy" (2), noting Suvin's similar language – his use of the term "estrangement" – in discussing utopia and SF (3).

[59] I do not say since the genre has existed because, as previously discussed, there is little agreement on when and with which text the genre began. Wells' text is considered the beginning of the genre by some (those who require technology as a hallmark that determines inclusion in the genre) because of its ground-breaking use of the imagined (non-existent) machine that acts as vehicle in reaching the future setting.

Because the very foundations of utopia include personal choice, any utopia that requires stasis will by definition shift to dystopia, as implied by Le Guin's subtitle – "An Ambiguous Utopia" and her single reference to Anarres as "a prison camp" (2). What makes Le Guin's utopia ambiguous rather than false is a combination of the reorganization of the way in which pleasure is shifted from a defining feature of utopia – a "germ of obsession that infects so many detailed descriptions of the ideal society" (Jacobs, Beyond, 109). Instead, pleasure holds a single position as one of many decision-making scales and determiners. But even more to the point, in dealing with the idea of stasis in utopia in *The Dispossessed*, Le Guin's most important shift is in setting the conceptual structures of the text within Shevek's conceptual quest to understand the interaction between simultaneity and sequence that restructures our understanding of the nature of utopia's relationship with time. As such, we must consider the metaphors that produce both stasis and movement within the text.

As previously discussed, in her introduction to the 2003 edition of *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Le Guin writes, "All fiction is metaphor. Science fiction is metaphor. What sets it apart from older forms of fiction seems to be its use of new metaphors" (np),[60] going on to include W.S. Di Piero statement that "truth is a matter of the imagination" (intro LHD, np). Although simple statements, the referenced metaphors are not simple concepts; rather, they require a multi-faceted, phenomenological approach to objects and constructs which we tend to treat as solid

[60] This idea is mirrored both by Nietzsche discussion of language as metaphor and Suvin's statement that "every theoretical explanation is thus *also* a metaphoric redescription" (Novum, 5).

and knowable, such as narrative, knowledge, and our relationship with time. The ability to project possible outcomes that will occur in the future as a result of present actions, to imagine a timeline that stretches forward and back, or construct a narrative from language all require a move into the abstract and the philosophical, i.e. the ability to layer a metaphorical understanding onto a material interaction. As discussed previously, according to Jacques Derrida such a move is by nature a philosophical one, one in which metaphor and philosophy are linked so thoroughly that a move to philosophy must include a move to metaphor (ibid). By evoking metaphor in ideas that we take as facts and interact with in material ways, like "the future" and "fiction," Le Guin insists that the relationship between object/action and metaphor is repositioned within the philosophical, as we "mark, organize, and clarify temporal experience" (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 3).[61] In an automatic and overt move to the philosophical, we expand our conception of each relationship and the resulting perception in order to situate the resulting information within the confusing world that is our "temporal experience" (ibid). From this position, for the reader, metaphor becomes indispensable – in particular, within narrative – a part of what Jim Jose calls "collaboration between the author and the reader . . .crucial to a story's success" (181), and we apply those metaphorical clarifications almost without thinking, creating a complex and layered grid of interaction that allows for "the disclosure and creation of new forms of meaning" (Theodorou, 3/23). Thus,

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[61] Paul Ricoeur makes this statement about narrative generally; I am applying it to metaphor specifically.

considering Le Guin's statements, her work is most effectively accessed through a consideration of the foundational metaphors of any given text.

In *The Dispossessed* the foundational metaphors are the wall with which the opening scene begins, the promise as not a metaphor itself but a structural relationship with society within time that mirrors the structures of metaphor, the ansible (the technology that allows for instantaneous communication regardless of distance) made possible by Shevek's "General Temporal Theory" with which his trip to Urras ends, Shevek's open hands, and of course, as in most Le Guin novels, the journey that spirals around to end in a parallel position to where it had begun. These acts/objects and their metaphorical extensions create the conceptual arc of the text, reflecting the Odonian[62] precept that "To be whole is to be part; true voyage is to return" (Le Guin, TD, 84). The claim sets up a circular conception of both time and interaction, an interconnection of repetition that includes the understanding that each of those repetitions must remain fluid and is, in consequence, a new creation in each new moment of its existence. In other words, according to the text, to function, to organize, to govern oneself with respect for the Other, one must balance that which separates with that which connects, understanding that to manage that balance requires full ownership of personal action in simultaneous juxtaposition to communal existence in which the present moment and the potential future both exist; as such, the relationship exists as a multifaceted and metaphorical connection in which respect for the self and the other is balanced.

[62] The ideology is named after Odo, the founder and rebel leader of the anarchic movement in the text.

Self and other is the relationship that is most central to *The Dispossessed*, whether that other is one's neighbor on Anarres, an anarchic and communal (in that there is no personal property ownership) society, or the "propertarians" of Urras who the inhabitants of Annares refuse to see as relevant in any form but that of a threat. The relationship between the two oppositional communities[63] is fraught both historically (the inhabitants of the moon/planet[64] Anarres are exiles/emigrants from the planet Urras) and within the contemporary timeline of the text because the resources of the moon are necessary to Urras and still mined by the Odonians of Anarres only because of the threat Urras poses to the pacific community that inhabits the moon. As such, contact is limited, as is represented within the first major metaphor of the novel introduced in the first words of the narrative, i.e. the wall that surrounds the space port of Anarres.[65] The wall is a figurative representation of most – though not all – of the citizens' attitudes as to the most effective relationship between the two worlds but is doubly important in that it signals the existence of those invisible, metaphorical walls within the text that are attempts to regulate others within an anarchic system that officially denies the right to regulate anyone. However, regardless of those claims, those regulations – those walls – do exist and

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[63] Donald Theall notes that the placement of the "capitalist aggressive and competitive . . . world of Urras" and "the anarchist satellite world of Anarres" is a move that reflects More's "juxtaposition of Books I and II" (Theall, 256), a move that is continued throughout utopian fiction through Swift to the present day.

[64] Whether Anarres is a twin planet or a moon is a shifting reference within the text, a fact which suggests and mirrors the problem of subjective position that underlies so many of the interactions of *The Dispossessed*; after all, a twin planet appears as a moon when standing on the surface of its twin, just as a position on a polarity privileges whichever end one views from allowing only a rigid and limited view of all the elements caught within the relationship.

[65] Here I would like to direct the readers' attention back to Philip E. Smith's text on Le Guin and Kropotkin as a useful subsidiary text. His discussion tracks an interesting reading of the metaphor of the wall which is, while not entirely relevant here, worth considering.

as such, create one stratum within the layers of the metaphor of the wall in that they are invisible and thus un-addressable limitations to various forms of access. But to begin we need to address that single physical limiting wall around the space-port.

THE WALL

The figure of the wall in *The Dispossessed* is a doubly effaced metaphor from which both the material referent and linguistic figure has been removed leaving the remaining conceptual metaphor to act as a highly adaptive and damaging free-agent within the society, a force which is both radical and slippery, and functions through borrowed and manufactured consent.[66] In general, walls exist to separate and communication exists to connect (whether that connection is well-intentioned or not – after all, one needs to connect in order to control), and as such both exist as master tropes and materialized metaphors. Thus, to consider the use of metaphor and its connection to governance in *The Dispossessed* one must begin with the wall. The wall – in fact any wall – is, as Le Guin writes, "ambiguous, two-faced" because "[w]hat was inside it and what was outside it depended on which side of it you were on" (1), a statement that evokes the ways in which walls command, restrict, and define – i.e. govern – people, or as Winter Elliot puts it, "walls . . . isolate and regulate" (150). In each case, whether one is protected or denied by a wall, walls are a matter of governance, and walls are central in determining who is a stranger and

[66] The concept of manufactured consent begins with Antonio Gramsci in his statement that the "State does have and request consent, but it also 'educates' this consent" (527). The idea has been used by other theorists, including Noam Chomsky, and is applicable in this text specifically to determinative metaphor, but as well, is relevant to effaced metaphor.

who is a legitimate inhabitant as made abundantly clear in the materialized metaphor that exists in Donald Trump's conception of border security between the United States and Mexico.

In the novel, although there is only a single, official wall on Anarres (despite that plethora of unofficial walls which will be discussed later) which exists to separate the community from its nemesis, Urras – a capitalist oligarchy – the presence of that single wall around the Port of Anarres offers a suggestion as to the reason the community is in the process of failing as an Odonian/anarchic system at the start of the novel. It is the existence of this wall and the accompanying metaphorical constructs that indicate the failure to enact the basic Odonian precept of allowing space for the new and the alternative – that much-touted freedom of the Odonian (45) – the space for both personal choice and "mutual aid" (61),[67] i.e. respect for self and the Other. In fact, that single wall limits that space both materially and ideologically. Existing both on the ground and in the minds of the failed Odonians of Anarres (not all Odonians are failed), the wall is an indication of the problems Anarres has attempted to leave behind, and it is ignored, in part, because of its innocuous nature: "An adult could look right over it and even a child could climb it" (ibid). As well, the fact of its *single* existence allows the people of Anarres to believe they have created a free state, that the refusal indicated by the wall is *only* a refusal of interaction with that which is outside the wall, the "thousand

[67] Here Kropotkin's influence is quite explicit in Le Guin's repeated use of "mutual aid" as a foundation of Anarres society. *Mutual Aid* is, of course, the title of Kropotkin's response to Huxley's claim that social Darwinism was and is unavoidable, a response in which he argues that cooperative groupings are more successful than strictly competitive ones.

million" others who would "wipe us out" (44). As such, the wall becomes a "necessity" and an unavoidable anomaly; except, of course, it is not an anomaly at all. Rather, it is a sign that signals the hidden infrastructures that have evolved beneath the appearance of anarchic "brotherhood."

Although Anarres is a self-described anarchic community based on shared resources and work, one in which there is no property, the fact of that single wall, despite its humble form, signals the existence of something within the wall that must be protected – i.e. something that can be owned? – a position which is always a static state. In creating that single, material wall, what is also created is the metaphorical extensions of separation and protection/ownership in an interconnection of the corresponding semic fields that include limitation and definition, and in consequence, the community must create other *invisible* walls to maintain the "owned" state created by this one wall. Once the need to protect one's "property" – be that property material or abstract – exists, the metaphorical extensions of that relationship cannot be avoided. The resulting system is one that supports a kind of "property ownership" in that belonging to that system allows ownership/rights to the community, and of course, such a system automatically creates a series of "strangers" – i.e. those who are noncompliant or unwilling to support the series of lies necessary to the continuance of the system as is. Thus, in that one material construct, that one action, the state of Anarres as an Odonian anarchy fails.

The fact that Anarres is failing seems incontestable when one considers the corrupt system Shevek faces throughout his attempts to continue his non-partisan research in physics as well as the violent resistance his trip to Urras receives (any

contact with Urras is seen as a threat). The violence is not a reaction to Shevek himself; rather, it is a general response to any question regarding changes to the status quo and the invisible hegemony. This response can be seen in the way in which the Music syndics "can't hear" (175) Salas' complex, non-linear, non-progressive music and the response to Tirin's "anti-Odonian" comedic play and his resulting "punishment" that is never categorized as such, but rather, is presented as an arbitrary result of Divlab's (Division of Labor) nonpartisan organization of work assignments. Over and over again, Tirin is set to work on a road crew rather than as a mathematician (169), the position which reflects his passion and his training. These responses, as well as Sabul's refusal to allow Shevek to share his (Shevek's) work in theoretical physics or communicate with physicists on Urras unless Sabul is named as coauthor (an example of the ways in which Sabul "steals ideas from others" [Jaekle, 87]), suggest that, despite claims to anarchy (constantly open to change and personal choice) and a society without property, Anarres has become embedded in a system that is ruled by the invisible hand of the norm by "experts." These "experts" go unquestioned because the "property" they own is abstract rather than material, and the walls with which they protect said "property" are also abstract and exist only as effaced metaphors that have been loosed from their material counterweight, ideas that exist despite having been worn away yet are not fully metaphorized. As such, the consent required by these metaphors is no longer informed consent but instead borrowed from the consent offered in the past to those earlier living metaphors that act as foundation and source to the effaced metaphor. As such, the effaced metaphor offers both the presumptive power of the

metaphorized word that we accept with the same unquestioning acceptance as we do the literal while also offering the extension of the figurative without the need for the informed consent of the receiver. Such are the invisible walls that exist at every turn on Anarres, walls that are cared for and used by that horde of "experts."

The experts of Annarres exist in multiple forms and inhabit a variety of positions that comprise the organizing – and de facto regulating – institutions of the community. Despite claims that there is no governing body on Anarres, that system can be worked against the non-cooperative by those already in power; in the case of Shevek, by Sabul. Sabul, whose "man" Shevek must be if he is to move to the more prestigious university at Abbenay (58),[68] is attempting to maintain a status quo in which he retains his position as expert. The fact that he is not an expert at all but rather a plagiarist makes the situation worse. His fraudulent state creates his profound sense of vulnerability (in Jaekle's work, discussion of Sabul's machinations is categorized under the section on "fear" [87]), resulting in Sabul's refusal to allow the publication of any new idea that he cannot claim (own) through appropriation or even understand, as is true in the case of Shevek's research and theories. In other words, as Sabul cannot or will not retain his position as expert through advancing his knowledge, in order to retain that position, he must attempt to keep the state of that knowledge in stasis – a direct contradiction to anarchy, which is defined by a state of change. As Laurence Davis writes in his essay "The

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[68] This moment is mirrored in the Urras sections of the text when the professors of Ieu Eun University speak to Shevek of "his man" (the servant Efor) (69), and Shevek is confused. The repeated words serve to connect Sabul to the "propertarians" of Urras, a connection that is made directly by Takver later in the novel.

Dynamic and Revolutionary Utopia of Ursula K. Le Guin," anarchy must exist as "a genuinely dynamic and revolutionary utopia in which the past never assumes a final shape and the future never shuts its doors" (4). So Sabul's need to hold the study of physics in stasis (his rewriting and truncating Shevek's theories where possible and claiming those theories as his own where not) forecloses all avenues of advancement because he himself cannot advance along with the study of physics, or – as Jaekle puts it – Sabul builds "walls around physics" (87). Although the study of physics may not seem to directly impact society, the precepts of anarchy do not apply only to the everyday choices but act as an interconnected system and may fail in any number of spaces or moments; as such, Sabul's truncating of Shevek's theories is an interaction and a moment in which the Odonian anarchy fails.

In fact, Sabul's control of Shevek's theories is directly linked to his control of the means of communication with the physicists on Urras as he builds a metaphorical wall (the only access through which he controls) that can be directly linked to the material wall around the Port of Anarres that stands between Anarres and Urras, and between Shevek and other physicists. If Sabul does not "recommend" a theory for publication, the state will not publish the theory; as well, the theory will not be passed on to Urras (with whom the scientists of Anarres are in semi-illicit contact) (159). Even letters to other physicists are stopped if Sabul does not approve them, and "[h]e will not approve those that deal with subjects outside his own brand of Sequency physics" (159).[69] As such, (that is, as a barrier that limits

[69] Sequency physics is a term coined by Le Guin which argues for a linear time line and a cause and effect-based material existence. Sabul is an "expert" in sequency physics and baulks when Shevek moves into simultanaiety.

the movements of ideas) the wall around the Port of Anarres, that small circle that seems to leave free access to all but those enclosed meters, seen as a metaphor rather than an innocuous, material barrier, allows comprehension of the size of that which has been cordoned off.[70]

In setting off the space port of Anarres, what has been disallowed or set apart is the universe – both material and abstract – and because the scope of even the material “universe” is too large and amorphous for anyone to claim full comprehension, the universe must be viewed metaphorically. Only metaphorically can most of us (mathematicians and cosmologists may be the exceptions – but likely even they are not exempt) understand the universe as a whole. In that recognition, we must also recognize that the whole includes Anarres, and in including Anarres, we must include Shevek’s work and his need to be in contact with other physicists – a right that is denied by both Sabul and the community. Accordingly, when Anarres shuts away the universe, that single act expands to create other limitations that occur over and over again within the text in the invisible walls that are extensions of the material wall that surrounds the port. Those walls, like many other metaphors in the text, are effaced and decentered metaphors constructed through a disconnect from the material component of the metaphor, but also, through Annares’ relationship with language.

As Shevek notes, in moving to Anarres, the Odonian settlers were romantics and idealists who felt that to deconstruct old systems in which all were indoctrinated

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[70] The repositioning of view point from inside Anarres to outside Anarres is likely the reason for Le Guin’s single characterization of Anarres as a “prison camp” (2) despite the text’s overall characterization of Anarres as a noble – if flawed – experiment.

a new language was necessary: the language Pravic. What is most interesting in Le Guin's conception of Pravic, for the purposes of this essay, lies as much in the exclusions as the inclusions. For instance, possessive pronouns do exist, but are for the most part unusual and unused within daily interactions in Pravic:

> The singular forms of the possessive pronoun in Pravic were used mostly for emphasis; idiom avoided them. Little children might say "my mother," but very soon they learned to say "the mother." Instead of "my hand hurts," it was "the hand hurts me," and so on; "to say this one is mine and that's yours" in Pravic, one said, "I use this one and you use that." (Le Guin, TD, 58)

In their attempt to change the citizens' relationship with property, the community begins with the foundations of interchange, excluding the words that allow for expression of that particular emotion or association. Such a removal – such a method in constructing a language – can be construed as a removal of that important step that is informed consent. In this refusal to allow for any but approved relationships in the language, the need for consent to that refusal fades into the far past of the original conception of the language. In this case, that restriction of consent only allows for the measurable, the material and the communal, an act which creates an erasure of a multiplicity of interconnected semic meanings including the idea of belonging – i.e. hand to body – in the erasure of the idea of possession. As well, in Pravic, all swear words are borrowed from Iotic (the language of Urras) because "Farigv [presumably the linguist in charge of the process] didn't provide any swear words when he invented the language, or if he did his computers didn't

understand the necessity" (Le Guin, TD, 234). Swear words, whether they are direct metaphors (usually analogies) or not, are closely related to metaphor in that they provide for expression of the immeasurable. The statement that the "computers didn't understand the necessity" can be directly connected to that exclusion from the measurable as the decision of a computer must be based on what can be measured. That said, Pravic does, of course, include metaphor.

Pravic's metaphors are ever-present and exist primarily within discussions between the characters as to whether or not something is acceptable, likely because decisions as to what is acceptable or not are nearly always subjective and the standards by which one decides that acceptability are too often invisible. In other words, such discussions are seldom presented as measurable, and thus, such conversations in Pravic are filled with references to whether an idea or statement is "organic" (45) or "excremental" (162). Clearly these usages are metaphors, but the metaphors used most commonly in Pravic are metaphorized words that create "cultural coherence" (Lakoff, *Metaphor*, 22) and, as such, are unrecognizable to the speaker and require no consent because the decision as to meaning exist only in the past within the origins of the language. Only when stepping into new or forbidden territory do Shevek and his friends use blatant and unapologetic metaphor, as in their discussions of the "wall." They use the expression because the literal statement is both unavailable – there cannot be oppression on Anarres because the community is the answer to oppression – and immaterial – subjective terms presented as objective terms (such as "good" and "bad") are impossible to question because their position as subjective has been denied. As such, metaphor itself is regarded as a perverse

force; on a planet which exists within the regions of marginality, excess is "excremental" and metaphor is tainted by that hint of excess. This dislike of metaphor matters because it adds to the construction of effaced metaphors within the society as a whole.

If, as stated previously, Anarras denies the metaphors that construct the central ideology and governing factors of the system by removing the physical examples of those metaphors – the wall being the obvious and ubiquitous example – that position is immediately reified in the creation of the idea of the metaphor as less legitimate. Not only are their no walls on Anarres, but there is also no legitimate position from which to explore the idea of those metaphorical walls within the language – no metaphorical metalanguage as discussed by Roman Jakobson as necessary (Aphasia, 235). In other words, the position Le Guin presents us with is a double effacement of the metaphor, but she makes clear that, effaced or not, provisions within the language or not, the metaphor remains extant. The idea is profound because it suggests that a metaphor can exist regardless of the existence of material component, *and as well*, without the linguistic form of metaphor as an accepted figure, suggesting that a metaphor is not linear as the simple cause and effect structure of Lakoff and Johnson quoted earlier insists. Instead, the removal of the linear cause and effect construction suggests that living metaphor is an interconnected whole that exists in necessity, produced by an idea that will be expressed in one way or another. That said, and as the text makes clear, a doubly effaced metaphor is a dangerous metaphor indeed, as suggested by the way metaphorical walls limit the movements of the people of Annarres.

The invisible state and the consequent unmeasurable effects of the metaphorical extensions of that wall on Annarres make the resulting limitations difficult to surmount because that invisible and unmeasurable nature allows for attacks from both sides limiting both the will and the need to act. As Claire P. Curtis notes, "The death of hope is found in both the pessimism that says nothing can be done and the complacency that says nothing needs to be done" (277). To return to Derrida's concept of the effaced metaphor (that disconnect from the material component of the metaphor), Anarres' relationship to demands and requirements which claims walls (objects) and commands (actions) no longer exist within the Anarres social order has been cut loose from – or has "effaced"– the object of the wall and left the metaphor itself as unattached. Meanwhile, using a language that delegitimizes the figure of metaphor creates a second level of effacement. As such, effaced metaphor becomes a free, agent, making the question of how to handle the invisible walls both irrelevant and impossible to tackle (thus setting up Curtis' equation) while the situation denies the need for consent, and as such, manufactures the very consent it denies as necessary.

The very lack of walls and rules on Anarres "break[s] the link with the sense of a particular being, that is, with the totality of what is" (Derrida, White, 9), leaving a system which is dis-organized through a disengagement between the word and act/object – in this case restrictive walls as objects – and as well, delegitimizes the very notation of the figure by which the phenomena can be discussed (metaphor) and thus leaps the moment that in a living metaphor would include consent. However, despite these refusals of a metaphorical relationship, the metaphor does not cease to

exist; rather, it becomes rigid as the metaphorical gears fail to mesh. In its doubly effaced state, the metaphor becomes static in its disconnect from its context – both material and linguistic – and with only the immaterial portion of the metaphor available, consent from the receiver of the metaphor can no longer be a variable as the relationship between material and abstract is no longer apparent. The construction makes informed consent impossible, putting in its place a borrowed moment from a distant past. As such, the system is immovable, a "white mythology. . . which has effaced in itself that fabulous scene which brought it into being" (ibid),[71] and as such, vulnerable to abuse. Because the wall only definitely exists in a material form around the Port and is consequently out of sight and because metaphor itself is an illicit linguistic act, the invisible, metaphorical walls can exist at every turn, particularly in the repeated claims that there are no walls/government while claiming the right to limit Shevek's choices because he has "adopt[ed] a course harmful to others" (355). Such a statement/wall is particularly effective as it presupposes the definition of the word "harmful" as a solid fact rather than a subjective opinion, the presumptive "fact" creating a fallacious and invisible limitation that disallows any action the person in the position of power deems "harmful."

As such, facing both the politics of the University in Abbenay and the disapproval of the community, Shevek is mired in inaccurately categorized fields of conflict and unable to effect progress in his work or, when he does manage to

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[71] Note that Derrida's construct of the "fabulous scene" does not include the elision of the figure within the language. As such, I am expanding the "fabulous scene" to include the linguistic forms.

progress, is unable to share that work. When Shevek cannot identify what has gone wrong on Anarres, his friend Bedap identifies the cause of the frustration as "[t]he wall. You've come up against the wall" (164). Accessing that illegitimate figure, metaphor, Bedap is speaking about the way in which public opinion in combination with insidious corruption of Divlab (Division of Labor) and the PDC, who "recommend" postings for the citizens of Anarres, determine what is done or not done on Anarres and thus in people's lives. Both departments are intended to create a fair and neutral decision-making system for necessary work division but are, in fact, used to punish and quell those who are not willing or able to comply (as made clear by the Tirin's repeated posting to road crews and Shevek's posting away from the University and his family when he will not comply with Sabul). As Shevek finally comes to see, "We've made laws, laws of conventional behavior, built walls all around ourselves, and we can't see them, [sic] because they're part of our thinking" (331). The walls have become effaced as the hegemonic influence of community opinion spirals becoming ever more rigid and punitive in adherence to a status quo that reflects and reifies a systemic fear of change which will only consider the pragmatic and the measurable. That refusal of the abstract and unmeasurable creates a state which Jaekle notes is an "internal threat" to "[a]n anarchy based on the complementarity between individual freedom and social responsibility" (85), and one which – of course – creates limitations and dictates behavior and choice.

The laws and walls of which Shevek speaks and the resulting rigidity of the community is a direct reflection of the policy on Anarres to refuse contact with anyone other than the population of Anarres. This refusal is most easily attributed to

a fear of the Other, specifically figured as "strangers" and links Anarres back to Urras because only a form of "propertarian" ideology suggests some belong and others do not. As such, it is also a response that can be figured as an attempt at ownership. As previously discussed, those laws/walls must be, as Shevek notes, invisible in their effaced, silenced, yet metaphorical state because the ideology on which Anarres is based casts such desires regarding possession and stasis as unacceptable. However, the overarching refusal of contact that exists in the material wall and the metaphorical extensions of that wall is an attempt to *possess* an unchanging utopic state, as are the attempts by Divlab and the PDC to control the movement and work of dissenters. Sabul's desires to "own" his position at the University (his mini-utopia) rather than fill that position as the ablest to do the job (a fact stated overtly by Takver in her exclamation that Sabul is a "profiteer!" a "petty-minded, envious little Odo-spouter!" [239]), and that desire is both a result of and a contributory factor to the corruption into which Anarres has fallen in its attempts to "own" utopia. It is Sabul and Rulag's (Shevek's biological mother and main combatant in his attempt to travel to Urras) and the community's belief that "the future is something which . . . has been attained" (Ferns, 258) and thus completed – i.e. static – while they claim adherence to the precepts of Odo (change and freedom), and their additional belief that that future can be maintained in a static state that creates the failure of the very state they claim to have achieved.

The moment one believes the anarchic state attained (i.e. completed), the desire to maintain (i.e. own) that state *refutes* anarchy through the rejection of the change that defines that ideological state. "Propertarian" instincts come in all sorts

of disguises. Sabul and Rulag and co.'s refusal to admit to and relinquish their "propertarian" instincts (that is, control over choices made on Anarres and the definition of what it is to be Odonian) combined with their desire to be able to make the claim that Anarres places no limits on its citizens creates the effacement of the material walls while reifying those walls in a metaphorical and invisible state, all of which makes change difficult to effect. As such, in its refusal of the necessary fluidity of anarchy, i.e. in the multiple attempts to disrupt any change in the way utopia is realized, the community's relationship with time is also disrupted, as Shevek's discussion of the relationship between a promise and one's existence within time denotes.

THE PROMISE

Despite an abstract facet to their make up that creates a form of postponement reminiscent of the distance inherent in metaphor, promises are not metaphors; they are too literal and to overt to be considered as figurative. That said, Le Guin/Shevek's discussion of the promise and its relationship to time both reflects and sheds light on the way acts of will and metaphors function, reifying the existence of the role consent plays in each interaction, and as such, creating a parallel between the two forms. In order to consider a promise a metaphor, one would need to return to Nietzsche's characterization of all language as metaphor. Language takes on a presentation of "truth" in that when a word has been understood as a direct stand-in for an object, action, or idea over time, the replacement of one for the other takes on the appearance of a kind of inevitability, as Nietzsche states,

> [I]f a precept has been reproduced millions of times and has been the inheritance of many successive generations of man, and in the end appears each time to all mankind as the result of the same cause, then it attains finally for man the same importance as if it were *the* unique, necessary precept and as if that relation between the original nerve-stimulus and the percept produced were a close relation of causality. (Nietzsche, 8)

As such, all language exists as a form of effaced metaphor; however, in order to make use of language one must attempt to move past language's metaphorical state and accept the presumptive response to language as a causal reaction in which the object and the word are automatically accepted as interchangeable. From this standpoint and within such a configuration of the relationship, promises are not metaphors. However, in that overt equation of "I promise" to "I act to complete the promise" is an entirely visible production of Ricoeur's discussion of acts of will.

As discussed previously, Ricoeur breaks down any act of will into three steps: decision, movement, and consent. The equation is interesting in that it breaks down the method by which we make decisions, but also in that it reflects – almost directly – the structure of metaphor, except that, for a metaphor to be a living metaphor, i.e. constructive and functional, the moment of consent is shared and repeated in each interchange. Both the person who vocalizes and the one who receives must consent to the impertinence of the predication in order that said predication becomes pertinent and the metaphor be successful. In a promise, that equation is reorganized: "I decide" is followed by "I consent" – that is, "I promise" –

to "move my body" some time in the future. But again, even if the promise is to oneself, the extension into the future means that there is a double moment of consent, either the consent of another person, or the consent of another *self* – the self who will enact the promise in the future. Shevek's discussion of the relationship between promises and time – a discussion that ironically and importantly takes place during Vea's cocktail party in which the social roles are played out in their multiplicity of power positions; the "shyer man" speaks "not at all shyly" while out-going Vea seems "relieved to be put in her place" (224) – suggests that consent in this position acts as a foray into the unknown, if only the limited unknown of one's intentions in a different time and space.

In fact, Shevek claims that a promise is both a recognition of the past and a commitment to the future,[72] and a broken promise "is to deny the reality of the past; therefore, it is to deny the hope of a real future" (225). In Anarres, the promise is supposed to have taken the place of governmental structures; both the grand promise of anarchy and each individual promise of each individual member of the community to freedom and "mutual aid" (61) act as a relationship with the

[72] This construction of a promise reflects the more general idea of a performative speech act. Theory of performative speech acts begins with J.L. Austin's coining of the term to delineate speech acts that "act," that are "constative" (3), a promise being one form of performative speech act: "the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as, or as 'just', saying something" (5). The most direct example of a performative statement are pronouncements such as marriage or guilt. From Austin the theory moves on through Jacques Derrida's essay "Signature, Event, Context" in which Derrida broadens the scope of influence of the performative statement through repetition and public display, suggesting far-reaching, uncontrolled implications: "In such a typology, the category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place, but from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and system of utterance" (Signature, 18). From Derrida we move to Butler, whose discussion of gender as a performance created by performative speech acts rather than a natural state an individual is born into and the ways in which change must be effected as a result of that hegemonic force is where we rejoin the current chapter. There is a full discussion of Butler's work in Chapter Three.

community as a whole. The promise acts as a governing structure in that within the concept of an Odonian society, in which all is shared and the greater good is prioritized, a systematized governing body is not necessary or productive if the individual and the community consent to and enacts her/his/their promise. In acts like Sabul's "propertarian" ownership of physics as produced by his invisible "walls" that determine who is published and where publications appear (i.e. whether publications make it into the limited mail slot on freighters destined for Urras), that promise is broken, but it is also broken in the existence of that single boundary that is the wall around the Port of Anarres.

The wall that surrounds the port denies the promise of an Odonian community; in fact, for the promises that construct the Odonian conception of society to continue, those promises must be structured in layers that work in multiple forms. Shevek's discussion of promises presents the promise as a form in which sequency and simultaneity must exist together: in other words, a promise is an act that is constructed through linear, causal relationships – I desire such and such an effect and make a promise to achieve that effect – but as well, is simultaneously extant in that the statement and act are simultaneously interconnected. In other words, the promise is an act that is created through a series of interconnected and sequential decisions, but to exist as an unbroken promise, the promise must span – exist simultaneously – in the moment in which it is stated, and as well, the moment in which it will be completed. As such, the promise of an Odonian anarchy must be enacted repeatedly, must "become a permanent revolution" (Theall, 82). But, as Theall notes, "because circumstances are always changing, the return to founding

principles always takes society to a new place" (82) because time spirals rather than circles. Or, as Le Guin notes, because time spirals, "You *can* go home again . . . so long as you understand that home is a place where you have never been" (55). Thus, each new day in the revolution is a new revolution (changing state) and a next revolution (turn of the spiral) which exists as both the next step and a new beginning.

So, if Shevek's discussion of promises is correct, then promises have multi-temporal existence in which the statement that "I will do such and such" exists in the moment of the statement but also in the moment of the act itself. As such, if kept, the promise exists as present and future but also, in the moment of completion, as past at the moment when the completed act refers back to the original statement. A promise that does not exist as a multi-temporal fact, is not a promise at all. In fact, if, as Shevek suggests in his discussion of perspective as to whether time "flows past us" or whether it is "we who move forward from past to future" (221), within a kept promise, we exist simultaneously through the various stages of that promise, none of which can be left behind, suggesting that both simultaneity and sequency produce our lives. In terms of the society on Anarres, each move of a member to lock down a particular belief or state (Rulag's belief in the need for the wall to ensure a form of Odonian structure that is familiar to her, or Sabul's desire to keep the study of physics in a state fully available to and controlled by him) exists as a moment in which the Odonian anarchy fails. In fact, if one considers the Odonian ideology as a kind of promise, in order for that promise to be kept, the precepts of Odo must be enacted such that the anarchy can be constructed over and over again, so that each revolution contains a promise that loops forward to the action that in turn loops back

to the statement. It is a fascinating pattern, and one that is evident within the structures of metaphor.

In Le Guin's living metaphors the same pattern occurs. Just as the promise determines the action in the future, a successful metaphor determines the newly constructed comprehension of an abstract thought in that future with each usage employing language to loop between the material object or action and the abstract conception of the newly pertinent predication. With each revolution – each new participant – a non-effaced/living metaphor returns to a new position on the spiral, creating new meaning that includes all the new context that exists within the new position of each next moment within the living metaphor.[73] Because the effaced metaphor has lost contact with the material portion of the equation, the loops are disrupted and the moment of informed consent is replaced with borrowed or manufactured consent, all of which creates stasis – a circle rather than a spiral – that in turn produces the aberration of the "free agent." So, if we follow the metaphor of the wall throughout the text, the opening paragraph quoted at the beginning of this chapter sets up but does not limit the existence of the figure of the wall within the text. Each result of a collision with the figure of the wall – Tirin's madness, Bedaps despair, and Shevek's dismissal – acts as a negative promise. A statement, that until it is refused or defused, appears innocuous but blocks access to change, all the while,

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[73] This conception of the constantly reified and recreated metaphor brings a new dimension to Ricoeur's conception of a living metaphor, as the metaphor must evolve and change like a living being – or like any utopia that manages to evade the nearly inevitable resulting dystopia. Of course, this fluidity can be figured as negative – as "contagion" – as does Peta Mitchell in her text *Contagious Metaphor*, in which she makes the statement that "metaphor not only picks up the attributes of contagion, but also sends some of its own" (21). The only answer to such positions is that all contact can be considered contagion; however, contact is inevitable and unavoidable.

as with all effaced metaphors, those walls must be recognized and circumvented before any further movement can be considered.

POSSESSION: OPEN HANDS

Although most citizens of Anarres have no interest in possessing goods, many are attempting to "possess" a utopic/anarchic state creating another doubly effaced metaphor in which possession of material goods becomes invisibly metaphorized in the possessive relationships enacted by the failed Odonians. Possession and the drive to possess is the morally repugnant converse of Anarres and the holy grail of Urras, and it is the lack of balance between the two that is causing the respective failure on the two worlds;[74] however, on Annares, the desire for property has been transmuted, disguised and hidden through a double effacement within the dogma of the ideology employed by both community and state such that it limits the actions of those who seek change. The dogma acts as a refusal of difference, in particular the difference of individuality both human and situational – one of the much-predicted outcomes of utopic structures, as discussed by myriad writers such as George Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*. Le Guin too looks at what may be an inevitable response to the need for constant change that is anarchy in her discussion of the communal shaming of those who seek privacy or demand personal rights, but she does so in a nuanced discussion

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[74] Urras' failure is complex and would requires another chapter to discuss in full but can be synopsized through the repression and poverty in which a large number of the population exists while a small number exist in luxury, the "pauperization of the labourers" (Hobsbawm, 21) that Marx predicted.

of the need and existence of particularity, and of where and when those rights create a necessary space in which to expand rather than a territorial and "propertarian" response.

The foreclosure of the question of what is "propertarian" behavior falls into the void left by the eliding of the linguistic unmeasurable as well as the outlaw status of the possessive form. When, as a young child, Shevek reacts to another child who has intruded into his space and blocked the sunlight he has been enjoying with a shove and the words "Mine sun!" (27), he is not claiming possession of the sun; rather, he is requiring space on the planet as well as expressing a personal need but is reprimanded as a budding "propertarian" (58) because of the use of the possessive pronoun. Anarres has made a fetish of a refusal of the right to own property, and in doing so has elided the conception of self and belonging. Just as discussed earlier, mothers are "the mother" and anyone's hand is "the hand"; the idea of personal need has been elided, so much so, that Shevek responds uncomprehendingly to his professor Mitis' statement that "you [Shevek] will be his [Sabul's] man" (58). The lack of personal pronouns is perceived as creating a fluid and mobile relationship with the environment including the bodies of the citizens of Anarres. In referring to one's hand as "the hand," ownership is negated, the body is dispossessed of the hand, reconfiguring the hand – and consequently the body – as yet one more kind of tool for the organism that is the community. Yet Le Guin suggests some kinds of possession are inescapable and necessary to the definition of self, and as such, the existence of the community.

Shevek's failure to "own" his own ideas result in damage to his work, an "emasculated abridgement" (241) that is the result of Sabul's blackmail and extortion. As Mark Tunic notes in his essay "The Need for Walls: Privacy, Community and Freedom in *The Dispossessed*," "without privacy and without property one risks losing one's individuality" (140). In the case of Shevek's work as a physicist, he is able to do his first great work on simultaneity because he is free: "Lack of physical labor, lack of variety of occupation, lack of social and sexual intercourse, none of these appeared to him as lacks, but as freedom [sic]" (112). The work comes easiest when Shevek is "unattached" allowing him to prioritize the work. It is a position that only takes him so far, but even so, it does allow him the original gains, and in fact, later, after that first work is done and he has failed to claim himself and his work publicly, the results are disastrous. Whether those claims are the claims of Anarres community, who demand the denial of self, or those of the "propertarians" of Urras, who wall Shevek in in order to harvest his work for profit, the ability to retain his self definition is of the utmost importance to the Shevek's integrity as a physicist and a human being, and as such, to his work.

On Anarres, at the university, Shevek suffers because his needs do not reflect the simplest understanding of Odonian mores. He finds he must evolve his ideas beyond those of that degraded and fetishized version of Odonian ideology that standardizes instead of equalizes, or as John Feteke puts it, has "congealed into doctrine" (132), all the while being careful not to fall into a simple rejection of his own comprehension of what it means to be Odonian, in order to continue his "journey." It is not for nothing that we metaphorize comprehension of knowledge as

ownership;[75] until Shevek can create or determine the defining lines of himself, he cannot work effectively, as made clear in his need for a private room which he considers as "excremental" and a "moral thorn" (110) yet finds indispensable to his work. Here Le Guin returns to the question of individual and community and the necessary balance between the two in creating a functional interaction.

For Shevek, talent and knowledge bring privilege, a relationship which he first greets with shame and guilt but comes to understand as unavoidable in his attempts to do work that is only available to him.[76] Still, he does find balance in that, although he must maintain ownership when necessary, his final response to the work is communal in that he makes clear that the product of the work for which he requires privilege is not personal property, delineating the difference between journey and result. Over the course of the novel, he moves from astonishment at his discovery that Sabul wants to "keep the new Urrasti physics *private* – to own it, as a

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[75] The interconnection of capitalism and the academy is a complex discussion which requires its own paper, but even in the most basic way, we feel we own the knowledge that we gain and/or produce. As a writer of both fiction and non-fiction, I have no wish to see copyright laws disappear, but their very existence both defines and produces a relationship that makes clear the concept of ownership within the structure of knowledge production.

[76] Nadia Khouri states in her text "The Dialectics of Power: Utopia in the Science Fiction of Le Guin, Jeury, and Piercy" that "power is usually closely interconnected in SF with knowledge itself" (49), an interesting statement in that it reflects the fact that Shevek's story is not that of any other anarchist because his access to knowledge that is available to no one else creates a position of alterity. Le Guin tends to discuss "heroes" (specifically male heroes) in her early work – less so in the more recent texts, in fact, Amy M. Clarke puts *The Eye of the Heron* as the turning point in Le Guin's relationship with both feminism and the male Hero – a fact/problem she herself (Le Guin) addresses in her text "Places Names" in *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places,* and in focusing on protagonists whose positions are unlike other positions, there is the danger of creating the very class system she is trying to critique. That said, I have to point out here that Khouri's text is itself problematic in that it fetishizes tragedy and pain, refuses to address the multiplicity of positions in Le Guin's text focusing only on the polarized binary, and includes a number of inaccuracies as to the facts of the plot and within her logical constructions. Most importantly, her dismissal of the importance of an "individual's awareness" (53) when all change is built exactly on that primary position transforms her discussion into a desire for the unattainable – her specific complaint about Le Guin – leaving her work of limited usefulness.

property, a source of power over his colleagues" (109) to the statement about his simultaneity theory that "I am that book" (240) (a sort of personal conflation that is related to ownership), to his final position of offering his General Temporal Theory to all. Here it is worth noting that Shevek's is an "all" that includes Anarres, Urras and the Ekumen, despite Sabul's original acquisitive/protectionist response and the various scientists of Urras' urgings to give/sell the information to whichever faction they belong. In fact, throughout the text, Le Guin's most interesting living metaphors evolve; however, in each case, their spiraling on to the next incarnation of meaning only becomes fully apparent at the end of the novel in which Shevek's open hands that conclude his journey become the final representation of his relationship with both knowledge and his community. It is a position that results in the production of the ansible, a communication device that both materially and metaphorically changes the shape of space and time, but also a position that is representative of the way his "journey" – his construction of self – reflects his general temporal theory in that it is both sequential and exists simultaneously.

COMING HOME: THE JOURNEY

If the effaced metaphor of the wall begins *The Dispossessed*, the text ends with the primary, foundational living metaphor – the journey. The journey is a figure that exists temporally, spatially, and metaphorically in simultaneous grandeur produced by Shevek's acknowledgement of and consent to a universe well beyond comprehension. Like all living metaphors, the journey exists both sequentially and simultaneously in ever-evolving particularity that creates a fluidity that continues to

respond to the changing moment with its changing players and consequently never falls into a universalist form. Le Guin has been interested in journeys throughout her career, thus creating the infrastructure of the Hainish Cycle with its need to reconnect the many worlds of Hain and the creation of the Ekumen. Rather than an imperialist dream of colonization that a tale told about the original Hainish Empire would have been, Le Guin's texts take place in a gentler moment of the interaction, a moment after failure, a moment already containing the tragedy of loss both of the colonized (WFWF) and the colonizers (LHD), as those communities – those colonies – have lost touch and even knowledge of one another, and are only now offered the opportunity to reconnect and reconstruct.[77] As such, the pattern of spiraling movement that circles only to return to the old that is new exists, not only in each text, but in the conception of the series of tales, and in fact, in the structure of *The Dispossessed* itself with its two timelines and their doubled forward movement

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[77] The unequivocal postcolonial connotations of the Hainish Cycle require an analysis of their own which will be addressed later. What I will note here is the fraught, potentially convenient choice of the loss of knowledge embedded in this series. Ekumenical agents and mobiles in various texts comment on and respond to the more brutal past of Hain including Gethen's history as a genetic experiment in LHD and the destruction of the culture of Athshe in WFWF, as well as to other untold cost to the planets swallowed in the expansion. Le Guin has chosen a point in the history of Hain which includes a community that promotes a much more respectful yet still intrusive reconnection with the human communities that are a result of that brutal past. Although the Ekumen only ever *invites* each planet to an engagement with the organization, as Genly notes in LHD, the Ekumen is at an advantage. If the planet refuses the invitation, the Ekumen need merely to retreat to space and return days later for the mobile but generations later on the planet to try again. That said, it is important to note, the landing is never forced, the Ekumen will retreat permanently after the second refusal, and the past is never denied. As such, the series can be considered as existing safely behind the blind of a kind of social amnesia/loss of information that might very well change the reader's position, while taking into account Le Guin's insistence that the past be acknowledged and understood as a part of the present moment. Slightly reminiscent of E. M. Forster's much-condemned and (I would argue) misconstrued statement that "We are not concerned with the very poor" (39) which, rather than acting as a moral statement or a social position, acts as a delimiting structure about the parameters of the story, Le Guin chooses her own parameters within the actions available after the great destruction in order to focus on the methods by which reconstruction is possible rather than the means by which we are destroyed.

through time. As such, this section deals with the journey as a construction that mirrors Jacques Lacan's desire "to leave the reader no other way out than the way in, which I prefer to be difficult" (as quoted by Leitch, 1278) such that we must understand that it is "the experience and path of difficulty that are significant" (Leitch, 1278). As such, the journey and journeyer combined construct the highly complex metaphor that intertwines journey, acquisition of knowledge, and construction of self.

Like all the foundational metaphors in this text, the metaphor of the journey is layered and multifaceted, the underlying semic fields of movement, the new, and the unknown (to name a few) creating an interconnected web between space, time, and identity. Within this web the connections create implications that suggest journeys exist materially, but as well, within numbers, theory, and self. But, in order to work one's way down through the layers, one must begin by noting the material journey Shevek makes through space, as he moves from work post to work post, first as a child with his father, and then as an adult in a community the mores and expectations of which require all adults to lend a hand where needed despite preferences or family connection, while claiming that all citizens have the freedom to choose according to their own desires. This social requirement is important because the journey that takes place in the even chapters (and the past, which is – importantly – according to the theory of simultaneity occurring continuously) is often determined by those requirements. For instance, it is because of those requirements that Shevek is moved to Abbenay to work on physics – because his capabilities are considered as valuable to the community as a whole – and it is

because he refuses to comply and thus threatens Sabul that he is turned away to return to a general work detail that separates him from his family for four years. The social pressure is powerful, if oblique, and creates a need to return to the question of ownership of self. Certainly, Shevek and Takver question the value and justness of a system that leaves less and less room for the fundamental Odonian right to freedom of choice: "we're ashamed to say we've refused a posting. That the social conscience completely dominates the individual conscience, instead of striking a balance with it. We don't cooperate – we *obey*. We fear being outcast." (330). One could characterize the problem of endless movement (journey) for the sake of the community, as an ending to or at least as a stepping away from the journey that is Odonian freedom. Because of the loss of balance, the individual has lost any position within an ideology that began with the individual. In trying to continue that Odonian journey, Shevek must take his other great material journey within the text – his journey to Urras – despite the extreme social disapproval which calls even his physical well-being into question.

This second material journey is multi-layered in that it is his voyage to Urras that allows Shevek to complete his theory (yet another extended journey that stretches over months to years), but as well, to complete his return to Anarres with a new conception of Odonianism. Despite Khouri's complaint that all Le Guin manages is a moment of singular "awareness" of "a sounder perception of Truth" (53),[78] for Le Guin a personal connection to the community is the point and the

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[78] "Truth" with a capital T is Khouri's word – a concept unfitted to Le Guin's work. In fact, in *The Telling*, Le Guin uses the word Truth with an uppercase T to indicate a fanatic and simplified ideology (184) and later specifically calls into question the usage of uppercase letters to indicate

foundation on which everything else is built: "The Revolution is in the individual spirit, or it is nowhere" (Le Guin, TD, 359), what N.B. Hayles calls Le Guin's consistent "refusal to sacrifice the personal to the abstract" (105). In fact, for Le Guin, the individual journeys with the group and the group with the individual or the journey fails because in the disconnect each experience becomes "a closed cycle" (335); as time exists sequentially and simultaneously, the journey is sequential, but each moment continues to exist and influence the journey as a whole. The spiraling movement through community and time is made clear in Shevek's recognition of the way he is a result of all the time that seems to have been wasted doing manual labor away from his family, that "[t]he thing about working with time, instead of against it . . .is that it is not wasted. Even pain counts" (335). This relationship with time, is reflected throughout the text from his childhood thought experiment concerning the way a ball thrown at a tree can never reach the tree because it must always travel the next half distance and yet paradoxically does reach the tree, and as well in his discussion with Sadik, when he notes that "You can be four and almost five at the same time, too" (318). All of this to say that the most important journey in the text is a metaphorical confluence of time, action, and self which Le Guin states matters only in the moment when the product of that journey is returned to the community as a whole.

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authority: "good was always an adjective, always: good food, good health, good sex, good weather. No capital letters. Good or Evil as entities, warring power, never" (TT, 105).

OPEN HANDS: JOURNEY'S CULMINATION

Shevek's discovery and resulting choices reflect his relationship with his science in the way his General Temporal Theory suggests that time is both linear and circular, exists both in sequence and simultaneously. In doing so, he incorporates both the objectivist's view that an idea/concept/fact exists and thus belongs to all (circular time's existence and effect whether humans observe it or not) and the perspectivist's view that suggest the viewer is an active creator of what is being viewed (Burns, 196) (linear time as a perspective of the human who travels forward along a linear timeline). As such, even in accepting the objectivist position, the viewer has a claim and must *choose* to give, incorporating both facts "into a logically self-consistent harmonious whole" (Burns, 202). But the combination also indicates one's comprehension of self as individual – as acting subject – combined with humankind as whole, or Jaekle's complementarity: "a specific form of containing difference within unity" (77).

Shevek's evolving and metaphorical relationship with his work as self and acting subject suggests that, again, multiple forms of existence are simultaneously extant: one must own oneself such that one maintains definition enough to interact with the world, whether that interaction be the cognitive process necessary to create a comprehensive theory or the independence necessary to make a productive judgement, while remembering that one is a part of the whole with which one is interacting. To be effective, one must simultaneously exist as independent and as a part of community, i.e. once the work is done, the effects must be shared by all – the

community (and according to Shevek/Le Guin that community is humankind) must be the joint recipient of all products:

> Do you not understand that I want to give this to you – and to Hain and the other worlds – and to the countries of Urras? But to you all! So that one of you cannot use it, as A-Io wants to do, to get power over the others, to get richer or to win more wars. So that you cannot use the truth for your private profit, but only for the common good. (Le Guin, TD, 345)

Shevek's repeated statement that he comes and goes with "empty hands" (70) is accurate only because his hands are open so that anything he holds is always in the process of being released. As is true in the case of the journey, one cannot be in stasis. So too, the open hands exist both in the moment of release and as a element of a on-going series of events; thus, those open, continuously releasing hands are constantly acting, constantly Odonian.[79] On the other hand, regardless of their claims Rulag and Sabul are not enacting the precepts of Odo, but rather their own conception of what keeps them safe, a choice that places them in opposition to the foundational precepts of Anarres because to be truly Odonian is to be in permanent revolution, to understand that there is no "separation between means and end" (335). Odo's precepts suggest that one must leave one's hands open such that all that one has through the ownership of self is released to the community, and so, the single

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[79] The need to enact utopia expands James Bittner's idea that Le Guin has changed utopia into a "uchronia" by changing the question from "where" to "when" (247), an idea discussed by White in her survey. For, if, as I am arguing in this text, utopia exists only in the enactment of a utopic act, the question of "when" becomes predominant.

subject exists as individual and an inextricable portion of the group, all of which brings us back to that material wall that surrounds the Port of Anarres.

In the Aristotelian conception of metaphor – i.e. the substitution of one thing for another – the wall around the Port of Anarres is a substitute for the idea of limitation, more of a sign than a metaphor, indicating the signified limit. However, as a metaphor, that wall becomes far more influential, a limitation that can be morphed, transferred, and made invisible, one that, through Derrida's effacement and Pravic's elision of the figure, becomes a hegemonic force claiming rights to a consent that was offered long ago to an alternate interaction. Such an effaced metaphor, such borrowed consent, is a force that determines lives and choices for all but the most clear-sighted and courageous, and even for those few, is an influence not to be ignored. However, metaphor as a form is amoral and neutral, and works both sides of the issues.

When Shevek is able to understand himself and his life metaphorically – that is, as a compounding of all that has happened in combination with his position as individual in that unique compound – both Husserl's synthesized totality, a "unification" that "manifests itself in the metaphysical or continuous whole" and his (Husserl's) non-synthesized rose in which all parts are only separate through "a distinct act of noticing" (quoted in IEP, Husserl, section 3., np) – he can begin his effective work despite both planets' invisible, restrictive systems. His recognition of his life as a construction, "the edifice that he and Takver were building with their lives" (335), combined with his return to an appreciation for the foundation of the Anarres society, the beauty that exists in those "other faces" (228) still extant

beneath the corruption, allows him to see the “reality” that “he [had] stared at. . . for ten years and not seen” (280). Thus, Le Guin’s utopia does not exist in a “hiearchical” or “patriarchal” form that simplifies in the way it “projects male political goals and represses subjectivity” (Pfaelzer, 94). Rather, it is constantly dynamic and allows for and requires simultaneous and interconnected interactions between subject and group regardless of position or gender that are completely fluid creating continuous change. Such a scene is astounding in its size and variability, and thus, Le Guin points out that some patterns and constructions are on a scale that requires metaphor because some scales – even if theoretically measurable – exist beyond our ability to measure.

For Shevek who works with ideas so large as to be only available through a combination of instinct and knowledge – ideas whose foundations are often “laid in the dark” but are still “well laid” (187) because of his skill and knowledge, metaphor is an absolutely necessary tool – one that cannot be avoided or ignored. Whether discussing the vast ideas of time or his own construction as a physicist, he must deal in metaphor. The need is to maintain those metaphor as living metaphor – metaphor that must be repeatedly enacted and consented to in each moment, constantly renewed in all its particularity in just the manner utopia must be re-enacted over and over again as it is made new in each new interaction. As he considers his life, the realization that those years have not been wasted can only be understood through living metaphors of foundation and construction. Only through seeing his life as a complex whole, his relationship as “thoroughly alive,” can he come to understand that “[h]is sense of primary responsibility towards his work did not cut him off from

his fellows, from his society, as he had thought. It engaged him with them absolutely . . . It was a mistake to see himself as its vehicle and nothing else" (334). In that ability to incorporate his work and self – in other words, to enact simultaneity within his sequential life – he is able to make the leap and fully understand simultaneity and complete his General Temporal Theory which combines simultaneity and "sequency" and in the combining of the two, he and all else become a part of a grand pattern, an unavoidable metaphor existing in multiple forms that span the material and the metaphorical.

THE UNAVOIDABLE METAPHOR

Shevek's discovery reiterates the relationship with Klein and Astle's discussion of the appearance of linearity that is produced from the subject's position and acts as a blind for the whole, disguising the nature of the relationship. Simultaneity behaves just as living metaphor behaves – with its layering of the linear sequence of cause and effect while insisting on the inclusion of multiple momentary forms to create an interconnected whole. Again, as Nietzsche notes, it is only if one forgets/incorporates the position of subject fully into his/her relationship with the moment/world that one can interact with that world through metaphor – a necessary skill in dealing with anything unmeasurable: "in short only because man forgets himself as a subject, and what is more as an artistically *creating* subject: only by all this does he live to some repose, safety, and consequence" (8). Living metaphor, as an "*aesthetical* relation" (8), allows for that peace, security, and consistency in that it translates one's relationship with the world into a "schema" (6), a methodology by

which the world is comprehensible to the subject as a part of the whole. The relationship is dangerous in that it must be kept fluid and particular, that it must exist in movement, as an "interplay of identity and difference" that do not "melt together but confront each other" (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 237). Thus, as temporally unstable, living metaphor must be responsive to changes both situationally and temporally, and so, one runs the consistent risk of inaccuracy. But to lose that fluidity is, of course, to run the risk of effacement, that moment when metaphor becomes a rigid, unconnected free agent with a manufactured or borrowed moment of consent that is highly susceptible to misuse and abuse. That said, Le Guin suggests that metaphor is a risk that must be braved because in the loss of metaphor so much else is lost because with the loss of metaphor we must limit our world – both present and future – to the size of human material existence.

As the incomprehensible and invisible world becomes comprehensible to Shevek, he is able to make choices, including the choice to refuse ownership of his theory, breaking down both metaphorical and material walls by offering that theory to all. His gift exists in both metaphorical (theoretical) ways – another moment in which the linear movement of the theory through one group to the next is deconstructed such that there is a simultaneous moment in which all share in the new knowledge, a moment of utopia[80] – and in the material reality of the resulting ansible, the simultaneous communication device that forever changes the space and

[80] In his essay "From Anti-Abundance to Anti-Anti-Abundance Scarcity, Abundance, and Utopia in Two Science Fiction Writers" J. Jesse Ramirez describes the hand-made cup and knife in Philip K. Dick's text "Pay for the Printer" as "utopian objects" (85) because they have been constructed by human hands. However, Le Guin's work seems to suggest that it is the act of constructing those objects that is utopian, not the objects themselves, just as it is Shevek's act of giving that is utopic rather than the ansible itself.

time that separates humankind. As such, he creates a whole within the moment that acts as a form of interconnected communication, crossing barriers of all types including the wall. Only because Shevek understands the metaphorical interconnection between himself – or any self – and the whole (the community) can he release his grasp on a theory which according to the world of Urras – as noted, a capitalist oligarchy – belongs to him and can thus be bought and sold as a piece of property. Shevek is able to view himself on both a "cellular" level (in which he is in the position of a cell) as a working unit within a community, and as a complex whole in and of himself, and as such, acts as the balance required by the two communities in which he works.

There are many such wholes that must be resolved/recognized in Le Guin's text, including the need to accept both simultaneity and sequency, the individual and the community, and leave taking and return as existing both simultaneously and sequentially. Each of these relationships require the reader to see paradoxes as not paradoxical, but rather, as views from alternate positions using different tools with which to view in order to understand both the synthesized and non-synthesized wholes, whether they comprise a "natural" set or a constructed edifice. However, what our attention returns to time after time is the way in which those wholes are never rigid. To adapt Alice Jenkins' statement about *Always Coming Home* as a "novel that offers home as a possibility rather than a guarantee" (330), Shevek's gift is a utopic moment both because of what that moment includes *and* because of the possibility that moment offers. This novel offers *connection* as that "possibility rather than a guarantee" – a possibility as long as that utopic moment remains fluid

such that it can be constantly reinvented. When rigidity sets in, it does so because of an attempt at ownership of a state or a moment or because we have foreclosed the unknown and claimed it for a known. That rigidity signals the death of the state or moment in question. In terms of Ricoeur's act of will, the failure comes with the refusal of the release that exists in consent – that moment when one accepts the unknown as unavoidable and fecund.

So finally, Le Guin makes clear that there are no ends, that ends are mythology, pots of gold at the ends of rainbows that when reached turn into dross. Le Guin requires we accept a conception of anarchy that insists anarchy must be reinvented over and over again, and utopia exists in the moment of aiding one's fellow travelers while retaining the freedom that allows one to choose the way in which that aid is constructed. As such, anarchy exists in each moment within which one is courageous enough to be an anarchist and recognize that choices and promises organize the world, and that oppressive laws and conventions behave as a form of effaced metaphor in that they are linguistic attempts to create static ends, ideas that have lost connection with their material referent. She reminds us that it is only through continuous, fluid process that we and our community as wholes exist, and that it must be means/process to which we pay attention rather than focusing on those sparkly finished products that are so enticing but exist only as mirages embedded within our false predictions that in order to exist create limitation. In fact, Le Guin reminds us that, predict the ends as we might, plan and consult and organize as we might, in the end, the process/means are all that exist.

Chapter Three

My Sister, My Brother, My Other: The Alien in Le Guin

Ursula K. Le Guin creates characters that resonate, beings who move us remaining in our thoughts years after the book has been finished and placed on a shelf. Some we love; with others we sympathize, and some we only understand, but comprehension of and connection to the individual are secondary to Le Guin's project in that Le Guin's primary interest is posited in the way relationships between both individuals and communities interact as a dialectic. Meanwhile, those interactions are multi-directional as they repeat and return, each underpinning the next, creating patterns in which those individuals and communities are delimited as necessarily interconnected nations, cultures or species. It is a project that both requires and decenters metaphor, suggesting we can neither avoid metaphor, nor assume that the source of metaphor is the material referent. In fact, in discussing the metaphors that construct one's relationship with the Other, Le Guin's arsenal of styles of metaphor includes an alternative form of metaphor – the determinative metaphor – metaphor that, unlike other forms, is never connected to a material referent because it is constructed to serve a desire rather than as an attempt at comprehension. Determinative metaphor can be a particularly dangerous form of metaphor in interacting with the Other especially when that Other is alien. Le Guin's project is both furthered and complicated by the conventions of SF, a genre John Rieder characterizes as "premised on its non-reference to the real" (v), and one that includes the fact that many of those characters are not inhabitants of Earth, and

all of those characters are temporal aliens even when they are not spatially so. In fact, science fiction is a genre – a universe – filled with aliens, but in the end the alien of SF is not *that* unfamiliar because, of course, as Estraven in *The Left Hand of Darkness* points out, the other is always alien, and it is in that relationship, "I and thou" (234), that identity exists.

Without the Other, the "I" cannot exist even – especially? – if that Other is Lacan's "I" in the mirror, the I that allows us definition as unique individuals in the world while signaling the existence of the most personal realm of the unknown – that of the unknown self. As an unknown and in many ways an unmeasurable entity, exploration and enfranchisement of the "self" – that moment when Hegel's two "self-consciousness[es]" "*recognize* themselves as *mutually recognizing* one another" (631), a recognition that resonates back and forth between the two observers – requires metaphor. Whether it is the Ekumen reaching across the huge expanses of space to those lost planets and communities, or Genly Ai reaching across the tent to a new conception of the alien female in Estraven, or the Bosses of *The Eye of the Heron* who foreclose the identity of the People of the Peace through determinative metaphor, the interaction between I and thou is a relationship posited in all those differences that delineate separation, but it is also posited in what is shared. As such, metaphor becomes necessary in that metaphor produces both defamiliarization and connection – that predicate that moves from impertinent to pertinent (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 182) – and so, although the differences between I and thou are often apparent, as the other becomes more alien, what is shared is often elusive and unmeasurable, and as such, metaphor becomes more important than ever.

Le Guin constructs identities using a huge variety of methodologies and formulations that touch on, make use of, and can be considered through a number of different theoretical foundations including – but not exclusive to – Post Colonialism/Globalism, Queer Theory, and Gender Studies. As such, this chapter is organized in sections dealing with various theoretical determinants with a recognition of how those structures are realized in the various texts such that they interconnect through metaphoric overlay. In employing the metaphors embedded in our relationship with the other, Le Guin explores the ways in which identity exists as a joint creation through power dynamics, sight lines, and performative constructions, returning always to the foundational theme of her oeuvre: that a mutual respect as determined by consent, particularly in moments of metaphoric interchange, is necessary for any functional relationship. In other words, respect must always be a component of any relationship if oppression, death and destruction are not to be the inevitable result of the contact.

THE OTHER AS OBJECT: ORIENTALISM

Edward Said's revolutionary text *Orientalism* reconstructed our comprehension of the ways in which nation construction and national identity are fashioned, enacted, and disseminated, a process that can be interconnected to metaphor through the ways in which a nation's conception of self can be reconstructed through substitution and replacement – two of the most basic of metaphorical maneuvers. Although Said's is a discussion dealing with a specific set

of players – Egypt and England – the methodologies by which the national identity and even self-knowledge are constructed within this relationship hold true in a plethora of other relationships in which one member is dominant and controls access to the institutions of canonization and dissemination. Said's concepts are fairly simple, if radical, and are based on the foundations on which Western dominance stands: observation and knowledge, and the means by which that knowledge is controlled and turned into culture production. According to Said, it is through the eyes of the dominant observer standing on the foundation of national history and presence that identity of the dominated is realized, reconstructing not just perspective, but cultural space as well. However, not only is identity produced and disseminated within the dominant nation, through the institutions of rhetoric and public pronouncement followed by canonization and dissemination of that rhetoric, those applied conceptions of the dominated return home to recreate the dominated nation, creating as well, what Homi K. Bhabha calls, "subject positions" (2). As such the dominant eye constructs that which it views through "knowledge" of the dominated: Said quotes James Balfour as saying, "We know the civilization of Egypt better than we know the civilization of any other country. We know it further back; we know it more intimately: we know more about it." Said goes on to connect Balfour's/England's "knowledge" to an increase in authority:

> To have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it. And authority here means for "us" to deny autonomy to "it" – the Oriental country – since we know it and it exists, in a sense, *as* we know it. British knowledge of Egypt is Egypt for Balfour. (32)

As such, England's knowledge construct's England's actions and influence, but also, it becomes the authority consulted in any consideration of the colonized space creating not just England's understanding of Egypt, but the world's understanding and knowledge of Egypt as well – inevitably including Egypt itself. In just such a fraught interchange, Le Guin's little-discussed text *The Eye of the Heron*[81] presents the failure of interactions between two dichotomous cultures that have been left to survive on a distant planet after the destruction of Earth.

The Eye of the Heron is one of Le Guin's less-noted texts, presenting a deceptively simple plot of a story we all recognize from a more familiar setting. The planet Victoria, used as a prison world, is home to two separate groups: the first inhabitants sent from Earth, the organized criminals – families – of Brazil, a group organized around a patriarchal and violent set of standards that valorize male vitality, honor, and violence, and a second shipment of emigrants, a group of largely European, pacifist socialists, the organization of which resulted in a march tens of thousands strong. In both cases, the authorities found export the simplest solution. Sent off in ships that only functioned for one trip – out to the prison planet – before being consigned to their fate as disemboweled monuments, the two communities exist side by side, but the conception, that is what will be the defining features of each community, is still under debate – and – under construction through words and the actions produced by those words.

[81] What analysis there is of *Eye of the Heron* is summed up in White's *Dancing with Dragons;* White suggests that this text is Le Guin's evolutionary text in which she is finally able to move from the male protagonist to the female protagonist (63-64).

The city, centered around "the house of Falco," and the town of "Shantih," inhabited by the "People of the Peace" (37) (the PoP), referred to directly as "Shanty-towners" and "peasants" by Falco and the other Bosses (21),[82] are polarized and conflicted communities. What is interesting in Le Guin's construction is that the reader has equal access to the thoughts and conceptions of self and situation of the oppressed as to that of the oppressors – knowledge that is seldom visible in oppressive relationships around the world. As such, both the city's attempt to polarize, repress, and use the other community while viewing the pacifists as weak and enslaved, and Shantih's conception of the relationship as a cooperative and, on their side, an infallibly respectful attempt to survive that has gone awry are on full display. But, what is most on point for this discussion is Le Guin's presentation of how language/metaphor constructs and adapts that which it references and describes. As noted, Le Guin presents language much the way Nietzsche does in "On Truth and Falsity," that is, as an invisible metaphor that is converted to literality through the loss of recognition that words are not inherently connected to the material referent. Her position on language is directly posited in her discussion of the titular heron which outlines in vivid detail her conception of the way language functions:

> The Victorian heron was not a heron; it was not even a bird. To describe their new world the exiles had had only words from their old world. The creatures that lived by the pools, one pair to a pool, were stilt-legged, pale-gray fish eaters: so they were herons. The first generation had known that

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[82] Le Guin is clearly referencing oppressive and unequalised societies of the day, most clearly the South Africa of the late 20th century.

> there were not really herons, that they were not birds, nor reptiles, nor mammals. The following generations did not know what they were not, but did, in a way, know what there were. They were herons. (52)

Although at first the heron of Earth is still presented as the "true" signified referent of the word heron, Le Guin's unequivocal final statement that the Victoria heron is a heron to the generations born and raised on Victoria calls attention to the fact that the word is not a title attached to a material referent; rather, the word is an inherent construct that exists as bridge – a means by which the people of Victoria interact with their world but one that is constructed by the receiver at least as much as by the transmitter who (supposedly) is describing the attributes of the referent: "Truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions" (Nietzsche, 878). But as time goes on, the structures of language disappear beneath the weight of daily use and the referent becomes conflated with the word itself.

The interaction can also be considered a metaphor in that, for the first exiles, without a word for the long-legged creatures, they apply a word – Richard's "vehicle" – that is not literally accurate, but one that reflects their understanding of the material facts of the situation before them – the "tenor" of the metaphor (95) – which then, as it is adapted by the community becomes metaphorized in their ontological interaction with the only world they know. The excerpt presents three separate productions of metaphor: the living metaphor (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 344), the effaced metaphor (Derrida, 8), and finally, the complete metaphorization of the word heron in that the impertinent predication moves through impertinence to pertinence,

through effacement in the disconnect from the original referent, until finally, the assignment of the word becomes literalized. Despite acting only as a brief segue discussing an animal that is only mentioned a half-dozen times in the text despite its status as titular, Le Guin's discussion of herons is an important infrastructure to her exploration of the power structures between the two communities, one that reflects and reproduces Said's conceptions surrounding Orientalism, reflecting the steady movement from an idea to a constructed identity to an ontological "truth." The People of the Peace are the herons of the above discussion as their identity is reconstructed, their original identity effaced, to end in a "metaphorization" as they are "orientalised" and reproduced as slaves.

The People of the Peace are the remnants of a socialist movement/march on Earth that began with a promise of space, land, and freedom in a future version of Canada, Canamerica, commencing in "Moskva," what one can only presume is a future version of Moscow. The march proceeded across Europe, gaining thousands as it went, then crossing the Atlantic only to be obstructed in Montreal. After time in a concentration camp, two thousand of the People of the Peace were chosen by lottery and shipped away to the prison planet Victoria where (they were told) they would be able to build a society based on their precepts of mutual aid and equality, a planet already settled by Brazil's exiles, a community of "thieves and murders" (163-164). It is within these two disparate groups that the issues of identity and Orientalism play out. Despite the clearly defined conception of community that is taught and enacted by the pacifists, the views of the "Bosses" who live in the "City" cannot be evaded or ignored. Where one community sees the relationship as one of

trade and mutual benefit, the other sees a feudal interaction that insures their own position as lords of the land, so despite any hopeful beginnings the failure seems inevitable: When the People of the Peace took "over the farming enterprise of the community. . . sharing the produce fully and freely with the City," the City in response "provided them tools and machinery made by the Government ironworks, fish caught by the City fleet, and various other products" (58). The relationship begins as one that is based on trade, but the institutions that create technology and knowledge are embedded within the city. As such, when the "Bosses" decide to engage in an enactment of their conceptions of honor and status dependent on hierarchical relationships, they find those conceptions of identity require an oppressed people, and the infrastructure to refigure the PoP as such already exists.

Reconstruction of the People of the Peace as inferior through methodologies as basic as observation and statement is a constructed strategy, but one that can be converted into responses so instinctive as to fall within the dangerous zone of "the natural." The difference in perception becomes overt over a disagreement about a new settlement in a far-distant land that Shantih has sent a group of explorers to reconnoiter. Because of their beliefs in cooperation and mutual aid, the town sends a group to City Counsel to explain the move which will include only Shantih inhabitants and no caste system because the "strain of trying to keep up two social castes, in such a situation, would be intolerable" (41). But what the PoP see as sharing information, the Bosses see as a request for permission, their response to which is a ban on travel and to jail the visiting committee. The words that have been used by the Bosses to discuss the other community – "peasant" (ibid), "rabble" (ibid)

– now become particularly important as the discussions move to a new conception of "[b]ig farms. Large fields planted in one crop, for efficiency" in which the "*excess population* in Shanty Town will be put to work, and *kept under control*, to prevent any more talk about independence" (73 emphasis mine). At first the words seem to be merely name-calling, which the PoP are unable to take in because they fall outside the terms of engagement of their understanding of community, but the caste system embedded in the language of the Bosses discussing the movement and rights of the pacifist suggests the gap between the communities is massive, a gap that produces a severely polarized interaction despite all the PoP's attempts to negotiate. The PoP do manage to avoid the first of the forced work details by simply walking away from the labor site in the middle of the night, but that action is not without response, and it is at this point that the authority of the Bosses comes into play. The authority enacted through the newly conceived structures is necessary to serve – not the community – but the system imagined by the inhabitants of the city that allows the Bosses to retain their desired position or, as presented by Isiah Berlin, the "pyramid which they [each object in an all-inclusive hierarchy] collectively form" (quoted by Said, 70). However, as all positions within that pyramid are not considered equally desirable, "authority" – in this case force – comes into play.

Authority comes in all sorts of guises, and although the word is often conflated with "respect," respect is only one form of authority. Colonial history (and contemporary interactions) makes clear that in some situations authority can be created – at least temporarily – through violence, and a style of violence that is not only presented as necessary but can be figured by the oppressors as a demand

imposed by those who have been violently oppressed rather than said oppressors. Said makes the case clear in the following tautology: “England knows Egypt; Egypt is what England knows; England knows that Egypt cannot have self-government; England confirms that by occupying Egypt” (Said, 34). England’s circular logic creates Egypt as the source of its own oppression, producing a construction of the past that suggests that the hierarchy is and has been unavoidable. Le Guin’s Bosses are still at the point where they admit to using the “peasants” of Shantih/Shanty-Town for their own ends (unlike England), and those ends are a production of the characters’ value system that constructs the other as either object to be used or female (object) to be protected.[83] However, despite present knowledge, the need to restructure the beliefs of the inhabitants of Shantih is an important and necessary element to the restructuring of the relationship for the PoP and the reification of the relationship for the Bosses. As such, a “re”structuring of the PoP is actually a “con”struction of a necessary “other” which in Orientalism allowed European society to gain “in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (Said 22), that mirrored and alternate I of Lacan, and in Le Guin’s text, one that will create an unquestioned hierarchical relationship between the communities.

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[83] When Vera is separated from the men of the committee who are jailed, and she is sent to Boss Falco’s home instead of jail, the quandary of the unimagined situation in which a woman is in a position the City men view as powerful and thus punishable is a paradox that is avoided by hiding Vera away. That said, Vera herself is fully aware of the need for clarity within the situation and delineates her position clearly and unequivocally to Luz (Falco’s daughter): “I am not a visitor, I’m a prisoner” (46). It is a statement that reaffirms the need for cognitive dissonance if the men of the City want to claim theirs is a “natural” order. To escape their need for that cognitive dissonance, the bosses must refigure the PoP as failed rebels.

To be a "Boss" one must have a "peasant," a rigid construction that does not allow movement, thus requiring a specific series of interactions as figured in the discussion between Herman MacMilan and Boss Falco: "They may have to be pushed, we may have to crack the whip to make them fight, we may have to drive them to rebellion [sic]" (74). As People of the Peace are an uncomfortable and intractable peasantry in that they will not be shaken free from their conception of themselves as selves with the freedom to choose, the pacifists must be reconstructed as ineffective rebels who have been bested: "We must anger them into defiance, but not frighten them so much that they're afraid to act. . . We want them to strike back, while we have their leaders, so their defiance will be disorganized" (101). The hoped-for results are a loss of ideology and identity of the PoP: "What we want to do, and it will take restraint on our part, is to force them to betray their ideas – to lose faith in their leaders and their arguments and their talk about peace" (102). Into the void created by a breach of their own ideological standards, the Bosses will insert the identity of the slave using the PoP's own despair and guilt to suggest justification for their enslavement, a logical progression of cause and effect.[84]

The desired effect is that the PoP will feel their state as slaves is deserved and inevitable because of their own failure to live up to their ideals, and that effect is well on its way to completion by the end of the novel, as is made clear in discussions

[84] One of the most striking scenes in which this style of re-figuration is enacted exists in the 2013 film *12 Years a Slave*. The scene immediately after the abduction of Northrup is a moment of reconstruction in which he is beaten and, despite any statement he makes as to his own identity, is only offered the words "You are a slave," a method by which the self is reconditioned and reconstructed in an altered form. That said, Northrup never forgets he should be a free man because his lack of freedom is not posited in his own actions; whereas, if the PoP do not act "peacefully," they cannot be the People of the Peace.

between the inhabitants of Shantih as to what went wrong in the confrontation between the two communities. The PoP's ideas of mutual aid and pacifist action are sound until met with an outright desire in the Other for violence and death, a set of desires that are completely incompatible with the social theories the community uses to make all decisions. The PoP's logic depends on an assumption that everyone is motivated by a desire to create a better relationship, but as Luz points out "killing wins nothing – only sometimes nothing is what people want" (158). In response to the brawl that ends with death on both sides, the two communities reopen talks that will inevitably end in the abuse of the PoP despite the appearance of gains: "Some things are better. The trade agreement – if they keep to it" (169). Of course, the joint history suggests that the Bosses will not keep to any agreement that does not serve their immediate needs/desires. The strategy is appalling and recognizable, but it is only the most obvious and preliminary steps toward Orientalism, and mirrors more closely practices enacted on plantations during the Atlantic slave trade, not Orientalism itself. It is in a combination of time and the "improved" trade agreement that complete Orientalization will create a new version of the PoP that will exist as a kind of metaphorized identity that elides the PoP's original identity, just as the "heron" of Victoria elides the heron of Earth.

Although violence and force may play a part in setting up a relationship in which an authority Orientalizes a less powerful culture, community, or nation, the act itself is more elusive, more deceitful and harder to protest. In its most insidious form, Orientalism is an act of layering, a metaphorization, that includes a supposed functional relationship; the orientalising of another takes time in which observation

and statement must be reflected in actions – especially those of the orientalised group: “Orientalism is the discipline by which the Orient was (and is) approached systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery, and practice” (Said, 73) by both the authority and the Orientalized community. As such, Orientalism requires a kind of deceit that arrives wrapped in the presumption and claim of a respectful relationship, one that slowly erodes the self and community to end in what will be presented as the inevitable relationship of oppressed and dominant.

Such a relationship is evident in Balfour’s claims about the greatness of the Egyptian people, while carefully situating that greatness in the past where it is irrelevant to the more contemporary “greatness” of England. It is, as well, at the conference table at which the Bosses and those who speak for the PoP sit, where exists the false presumption that both sides value peace and thus are meeting to construct a respectful relationship; whereas, for the authority figure who is constructing the Oriental whether it be on Earth or on Victoria, there is no desire to come to a mutually beneficial relationship. Rather, the table at which they negotiate is only one in a collection of means by which the transformation is effected, a form of manufactured consent, a system by which a group is constructed in a particular mode with specific attributes, a “schematization” (Said, 68) by which one is placed in a relationship to which one has not consented. Luz notes the inevitable erosion of the community in her statement about the nature of the new relationship: “You crawl into Marquez’s trap in the South Valley and call that standing firm!” (171). In Le Guin’s text the only escape from the new, Orientalized identity is to leave because after a violent interaction in which both sides have behaved with aggression but only

the PoP feel that there was serious loss (loss of a communal connection to peace and integrity) that loss/failure becomes the foundation of the new identity. Over time, that foundation in combination with the “knowledge” the Bosses have produced as to the two allowable positions within their society and the structures in those new South Valley farms, the PoP will become what the Bosses “know” they are – peasants and tools – embodiments of hours worked, “a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work . . . a commodity” (Marx, 42), thus MacMilan’s characterization of the Shanty-towners as “excess population” (ibid). Unless working, the PoP are “excess.” At the end of Le Guin’s text, the PoP’s community splits with a small group leaving to create a new settlement outside the reach of the city, and we can already see the differences in the divided populace of the People of the Peace.

Resignification – the Orientalizing – of the People of the Peace is an enactment of a determinative metaphor in that the identity of the PoP is reassigned (they are labeled what they are not – that original conception of metaphor as a “misnaming”) according to the desires of the Bosses. Although Boss Falco seems completely cognizant of the process creating the new signification through both words and actions, others of the bosses – specifically Herman MacMilan – are reactive in their interactions rather than employing Falco’s proactive stance. MacMilan is responding to an instinctive desire; according to his understanding of the situation, he is merely stepping into what he views as his natural position, claiming that his abstraction is concrete and material fact: “We’re men, free men, masters of a whole world. It’s time we came into our inheritance” (72). In evoking

the word “inheritance,” MacMilan is employing the idea of the natural, and in doing so must reconstruct the PoP as peasants and rabble because “[c]onquering nations hold it to be Nature’s own dictate that the conquered should obey the conquerors” (Mill, 18). As such, the signification of the PoP as “peasants” is a “misnaming” according to the pacifists, but seems a “natural” truth to MacMilan and thus acts as a determinative metaphor in that MacMilan uses an impertinent predication to reconstruct the PoP not as a joint reflection or living metaphor in which consent of all involved – the signaler, the receiver, and in this case the referent – has been received. Rather, in using a person as a referent rather than an object or action, the Bosses have created a metaphor that is not based on Derrida’s “fabulous scene” (ibid), that material referent. Instead, they have constructed their metaphor from what they desire and imagine without reference to the literal facts that already exists defining the Other that is their referent, and *without the consent* of that referent. As such, the determinative metaphor stands alone, outside the interconnected metaphors that exist as a triad: living, effaced, and metaphorized words. Even so, determinative metaphors still require consent which must be gained from somewhere.

Where Falco is using the equivalent of Jakobson’s metalanguage to discuss the reconstruction of the PoP through the words they use to identify themselves – even in their name – MacMilan is unaware of the metalanguage (exists in a state of ignorance that behaves as a kind of aphasia [Jakobson, Aphasia 229]) and simply reverts to his implicit and unquestioned *belief* in the natural relationship – his imagined world. Metaphor in general exists as a mix of the two – both in the conscious attempt to “re”-name and in the unconscious attempt to adjust the “tenor”

to one's own conception that is the new word or phrase – the "vehicle" (ibid). Falco's scheming is an attempt to use language/metaphor to combine the act of naming with the attribution implied by metalanguage such that the naming is a deviation from the direct attribution, so in Falco's case an attempt to restructure the PoP as slaves includes changing the PoP's actions. MacMilan is more direct because, unlike Falco who plans around his recognition of the PoP as subjects, for MacMilan his "knowledge" of the PoP as objects is the only knowledge, or as Jakobson states, "for an aphasic who has lost the capacity for code switching, the idiolect indeed becomes the sole linguistic reality" (Aspects, 249). Determinative metaphor for the conscious transmitter is metaphor resulting from a desire for an imagined end, but the receiver and subsequent less conscious transmitter (as the receiver becomes in exporting the new metaphor) behaves as a kind of aphasic, negating information that is relevant to the situation because, for the less conscious transmitter, that information does not exist or is not relevant.

MacMillan, although not an aphasic, has the same limitations, and, because the "peasants" exist only as objects to him, his misnaming becomes a "bound [word] form" (Jakobson, Aspects, 246) (i.e. gains meaning only from context, in this case from MacMillan's desired end) and is not adaptable to influence from the referent. As such, he is only able to create determinative metaphors. With the inclusion of MacMilan's limitations, any renaming leaps over the stage of living metaphor and becomes immediately effaced and disconnected from the *apparent* source and referent because that referent is not the PoP, but rather MacMilan's desire to reach his perceived natural position; as such, the metaphor is completely rigid/bound. The

infrastructure of determinative metaphor is interesting not just because of the results of said metaphor in the world but also as an indication of the structure of living metaphor: that to be a living metaphor, a metaphor must interact as a whole that requires "consent" from, not just the transmitter and receiver, but from the referent as well.[85] As such, living metaphor cannot be a linear response based on cause and effect from a material source, and even an effaced metaphor begins as a living metaphor. All of which necessarily works to decenter our conception of the structure of metaphor as primarily material.

That said, the complete Orientalising of the PoP is yet to come because they are not objects and, as such, cannot be misnamed without comment and action. In fact, the reconstruction will take years of fruitless meetings based on the false assumption that the Bosses' goal is to work together, meetings that will act as a sink into which the PoP's efforts and attention will be lost, while in fact, each day will include the next forced back-step into the role of enslaved non-citizen, a scene that has been replayed over and over again throughout colonial history. As with the forms of Orientalization that exist throughout the world, relationships in which people and cultures are "misnamed" and metaphorized in an attempt to construct an imagined, desired world that services the agenda of the imaginer, the text leaves the reader with a sense that the reconstruction of those of the PoP who stay behind is inevitable. *The Eye of the Heron* makes clear that, without a shared standard of what is valuable, those who make and change the rules to the game, renaming/misnaming

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[85] The connotations of this interactions become more complex when the referent is not a living subject, but is rather an object, but the need for consent does not drop away. The consent of a non-subject referent will be dealt with in the final chapter.

as they travel through what is presented as reasonable negotiations, will inevitably win both the battle and the war, and determinative metaphor is their weapon of choice.

FEMINISM AND THE NARRRATIVE I AS CONSENT IN METAPHOR

> There's women's literature, but there isn't men's literature. Modernism is male, white, urban because anything that isn't urban is called "regional," and northern because it isn't "southern," and eastern because it isn't "western." There is a norm that is not honestly declared a norm. (Le Guin quoted by Walsh, 199)

> "I am a woman writer, not an imitation man." (Le Guin quoted by Walsh, 200)

Some of Le Guin's most important texts are texts dealing with gender and capitalism. Specifically, the novella "A Woman's Liberation" in *Four ways to Forgiveness*, is a text in which the abuses and interactions between the genders are negotiated in first person narrative, with all its "metaphor, or prosopopeia" (de Man, Autobiography, 930), and is an example of Le Guin's ability to employ the living metaphor of first person narration with its overt consent in the fact of a narratorial "I" to counter the "manufactured consent" of the effaced metaphors of capitalism. As in de Man's discussion of autobiography, as a metaphorical interaction between the writer of the text and the narrative "I," Le Guin, in making the choice to use the narrative "I," extends the metaphor she claims as the position of all fiction to an

additional metaphor[86] in which she replaces the narrative with the narrator. In doing so, she is suggesting that first person text acts as a sort of Lacanian specular "I" in the negotiation between subject and world, a relationship which travels back and forth between self and reflection to create a layered conception of the self. That more complex and complete form/reflection creates definition which then allows for placement in the larger scene within which the resultant self can engage. Lacan's form, that whole that is created through the mirror stage through interaction with the specular "I," allows for entrance into and interaction with the outside world – the "Umwelt" (Lacan, 1288),[87] and de Man suggests that autobiography acts a metaphorical extension of the self in the replacement of the narrative "I" for the writing subject. Each structure acts as a metaphorical extension that is able to recognize and counter the effaced metaphors that underpin oppressive systems.

The two forms of "I" – specular (at least in a metaphorical form) and narrative – are at work in many of Le Guin's texts, and it is through the combination that some of her most radical feminist discussions take place, metaphorical thought experiments that call into question the universalist assumptions as to what we know about the way gender acts as a regulatory structure. In "A Woman's Liberation," through Rakam's autobiographical telling of her journey from a child who has never

[86] Although de Man specifically makes a distinction between fiction and autobiography, noting that "[a]utobiography seems to depend on actual and potentially verifiable events in a less ambivalent way than fiction does" (Autobiography, 920), he goes on to add that the "replacement by the actual voice of the living in fact reintroduces the prosopopoeia in the fiction of *address*" (928) suggesting that the very presentation of the narrative "I" as the authorial "I" is both fiction and metaphor.
[87] Jacques Lacan's essay "The Mirror Stage as Formative" is a discussion of the way that an infant's interaction with her/his reflection is a moment which determines the individual as a defined being, a position from which the outside world can be negotiated, one which allows the individual to "establish a relation between the organism and its reality" (1287).

seen her own reflection to house-slave and "use-woman" to revered academic and activist, the narrative "I" and the specificity it offers acts as a counter to the effaced metaphors that keep the repressive societies in which she lives frozen within inherited forms of oppression. Through Rakam's knowledge of self that is gained despite determinative metaphors that categorize and instruct women as to their position and roles in a rigid society, Le Guin suggests that the narrative I as specular I allows the individual to determine knowledge and desire such that decision making is possible and, from that, definition of self. It is from that defined self that change can be effected, producing societies of selves that – although not perfect – are at least capable of change.

The planet Yeowe has served as resource and colonized product that supports its twin planet Werel similar to the way Caribbean plantations supported European aristocracy as well as England's general economic structures. Werel, a feudal style hierarchy in which all inhabitants fall into one of two categories, "owner" or "asset," uses Yeowe as both a site of production and a penal colony. In the present of the novel, Yeowe has gone through a number of changes over many years including existence as a strict work farm in which there is only the most basic social structures and slaves/prisoners are used up, i.e. worked to death, and replaced; the planet then passes through a transformation into a prison society to which use-women are imported in an attempt to replace the slave population through breeding, to the present of the story in which the Yeowen society has been reborn as a result of a recent revolution. Regardless, the social structures remain ones that promote the brutal oppression of women.

The most obviously feminist of Le Guin's arguably feminist oeuvre, Le Guin uses the inherited structures and morality in which, rather than re-structuring the society after the revolution, the position of "boss/owner" is not replaced; instead, it is merely refilled by the men who have been liberated, leaving liberation for the women as an unnecessary inconvenience to be avoided. As discussed by Audre Lorde in her text "The Master's Tools will Never Dismantle the Master's House," any revolution which fails to adjust the structures that underpin social interchange will fail to create radical changes; rather, the roles and patterns by which the people negotiate daily life will merely shift from one agent to another. In this text, Le Guin's adept anthropological background comes into play, as she constructs a cohesive history of an all-male community to which women were merely an addendum, leaving those women disenfranchised and ghettoized – and most importantly – oppressed. It is an oppression that does not change merely because the identity of the "Boss-man" has changed; despite the change in the agents' skin color, the hierarchy remains in place. Their position is defined in the character Yeron's interactions with the Ekumenical Envoy in the third novella "A Man of The People":

> Women made the Liberation. They worked and they died for it just like the men. But they weren't generals, they aren't chiefs. They are nobody. In the villages they are less than nobody, they are work animals, breeding stock. . . Our men are the owners now. And we're what we always were. Property. (167)

Yeron's statement creates equivalence based in metaphor (that is people as "nobody"), specifically effaced and determinative metaphors in which the consent has been a matter of force, manufactured consent that is created through the double bind in which so many oppressed peoples are caught.

Marilyn Frye's discussion of oppression in her text of that name – "Oppression" – discusses the "double bind" (42) which manufactures a kind of consent to life as it is offered to the oppressed in all its limitations, but also to the determinative metaphors that define and categorize, placing those oppressed conveniently outside protected groupings. Frye identifies the double bind as the structure at the base of much invisible oppression: "One of the most characteristic and ubiquitous features of the world as experienced by oppressed people is the double bind – situations in which options are reduced to a very few and all of them expose one to penalty, censure or deprivation" (42). Frye goes on to give outline specific examples:

> It is common in the United States that women, especially younger women, are in a bind where neither sexual activity nor sexual inactivity is all right . . . If she is heterosexually active, . . . a woman is open to censure and punishment for being loose, unprincipled or a whore. . . On the other hand, if she refrains from heterosexual activity, she is fairly constantly harassed by men who try to persuade her into it and pressure her to "relax" and "let her hair down": she is threatened with labels like "frigid," "up-tight," "man-hater," "bitch" and "cocktease." (42)

Frye makes clear that there are any number of double binds, certainly for women, but as well, for any other oppressed group, and those double binds are not accidental and not singular but work as a system to create “forces and barriers which are not accidental or occasional . . . and penalize motion in any direction” (43). The double bind leaves the oppressed faced with a choice that often includes a recategorization through determinative metaphor. Thus, in the case of women, a young woman must *consent* to being either “loose” or a “bitch” – both dterminative metaphors that reflect the desire of the transmitter rather than the state of the woman – because there are no other options available within the heterosexual lexicon if all the metaphors available signify the only two options – sexually active or sexually inactive. If she does not consent, the metaphor continues because, as in Orientalism or any other form that uses determinative metaphor, only the consent of those who determine the metaphor is necessary. In Rakam’s early life, categorized as an “asset,” she is either a “pup” (196), the sexual “pet” “Toti” (the name is shared with “my Lady’s” last dog) (204), or a “field hand” (196) – a moment of synecdoche that lies between effaced metaphor and a metaphorized word. There are, of course, choices to be made here, but not ones that include a position as anything but an oppressed “subject,” or more precisely, an object.

In fact, the elision of the Other as subject is important to the next stage by which the necessary consent for any metaphor is manufactured, especially those determinative metaphor that act as foundation to the polarized positions of “Owner/bossman” and “asset” so important to the social structures of both Werel and Yeowe. As in Orientalism, determinative metaphors can be produced or

borrowed to reorganize the position of inhabitants who live within a power structure; however, at first glance, the claim that all metaphor requires consent seems to produce a safeguard against just such abuses. After all, what subject would consent to a characterization of her/himself as an object, animal, or limb?[88] However, the movement from subject to object is a direct response to the need to circumvent the subject's rights, and the first right to be circumvented is that of consent to the metaphor. In fact, the determinative metaphor creates a tautology that changes the equation of the consent required because as a subject becomes object and referent rather than one of the receivers of the metaphor, that subject/receiver – now object – is no longer a position from which to give consent. As such, the determinative metaphor truncates the form of living metaphor and forecloses the need for the consent of the referent whether that referent is person, object, or state.

In the case of the owners and bossmen of Le Guin's text, consent to the determinative metaphors that allow for people to be brutalized, sold, or killed can be given only by other receiver subjects, that is, the owners – i.e. those in control of the constructed metaphor. The assets are in the position of the object of the metaphorical statement and, in a determinative metaphor, are not in a position from which consent can be given. Thus, it is the very act of refusing that moment of

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[88] Margaret Atwood brilliantly satirizes this process in her short story "Homelanding" in which she describes stereotypes of the two heteronormative genders, stating that "the prong people" (men) claim the "cavern people" (women) are "not people at all and are in reality more akin to dogs or potatoes" (90). Playing first on the synecdoche of "prong" and "cavern" she moves on to disrupt the ubiquitous metaphorized characterization of women as "dogs," "cows," or any number of (usually) domestic animals. Atwood then takes it one step further to the homely "potato" and in doing so, shifts the criticism from women to men in a moment of reductio ad absurdum. But regardless, the consent for the metaphorization of women as farm animal still exists between the subject transmitter and receiver, i.e. men, *not* the object/referent of the metaphorization, i.e. women.

consent despite the referent's ability to receive and disagree with the metaphor that acts as dehumanization and objectification of the referent. But the same is true when the referent is not an obvious receiver. If we return briefly to a consideration of the living metaphor in the first chapter – particularly that of foretelling and the hint that the unknown as the object of the metaphor must also "consent" through the consent of the weaver after a consideration in which one can only presume the weaver consults her/his knowledge of the unknown. In other words, in order that the metaphor be fully effective in its representation of the "fabulous scene that brought it into being" (ibid) the unknown must be "consulted" and the knowledge thereof acts as a kind of consent. In determinative metaphor, the metaphor becomes merely a method by which to complete a task in response to a desire, and both the subject turned object or any other referent of the living metaphor are demoted to objects. As such the predication embedded within the living metaphor which moves from impertinent to pertinent, is then moved beyond pertinent to irrelevant, all relevancy being consumed by the needs of the oppressor.

In constructing this equation in which living metaphor is bypassed in the production of determinative metaphor in order to oppress subjects by turning those subjects into objects, Le Guin turns our attention to the effaced metaphors at the very root of capitalism as human beings are turned into assets and women into a means of production becoming a "conduit of a relationship rather than a partner to it" (Rubin, 21). Regardless of whether the planet of Yeowe is a prison planet or a free world, the state of women does not improve (becomes, in fact, worse) as the determinative metaphors involving women are moved from the laws of the "Owners" to the

conventions of the "bosses," the men of Yeowe who have replaced the foremen of the owners. Because Yeowe was an all male prison planet before it became a prison community, when women were imported to maintain the population of workers, there was no position for them as a subject within the culture, and rather than adjust that culture, the women were simply re-produced as objects, even going so far as to remove the idea of biological fatherhood. Because no woman has only one sexual partner, she cannot make claims of connection with any one man:

> It's important that girls cease to be virgin as soon as possible, you know. Always more than one man must have them, you know. So that they can't make claims – "this is you son," "this baby is the chief's son," you know. That's all witchcraft. A son is chosen. Being a son has nothing to do with bondswomen's cunts. (Le Guin, AMOP, 184)

The disconnect from the biological facts of interconnection is important in the production and maintenance of the culture, but even more important is the signaling of the state of that information and the attempt to move the statement from determinative metaphor (woman as reproductive mechanism) to fact/knowledge posited in the repetition of the words "you know." The old man who is informing Havzhiva of the "facts" of the situation, has already accepted the determinative metaphor as a "fact" not to be questioned. It has been given the "sanction of society" and the "bosses" have substituted "public and organised means of asserting and protecting these rights [men's refusal of a subject state to women], instead of the

irregular and lawless conflict of physical strength" (Mill, 11). As such, the determinative metaphor becomes metaphorized and hegemonically sanctioned.

Women's position on Yeowe is a direct reflection of the equation outlined in Gayle Rubin's text "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" in that they are merely a means of the production of bodies, and that determinative metaphor creates a series of other determinative metaphors in which women's roles and positions are delineated and limited. It is a process through which "natural similarities" are suppressed (Rubin, 24) and "biological differences between the sexes. . . *create* gender" (Rubin, 23) in order that a segment of the population be demoted from subject to object. These conceptions based on foundational determinative metaphors are so deeply embedded they are presented as "facts," as posited in the old man's "you know," but they also appear in carefully constructed theory. Rubin notes Freud's essays on femininity are "descriptions of how a group is prepared psychologically, at a tender age, to live with its oppression," creating a situation in which "women have few means for realizing and expressing their residual anger" (32). This difficulty in recognizing the dynamic affecting the subject is directly related to the determinative metaphor and the tendency of the transmitter of such to treat the metaphor as "fact" rather than to acknowledge that the statement is both a misnaming and that the source of the metaphor is a desired situation rather than a response to a scene. As such, we can see at the base of many if not all oppressive bans, laws, and edicts the determinative metaphor that figures a person primarily as an "undesirable," an "alien," or any other of a huge number of convenient delineations rather than as a human being. Determinative metaphors are

a brutal force in the oppression of any subject, and according to Le Guin, the only response must come in the reclamation of the subject state, that is, in the first person narrative – in the use of the "I."

Le Guin makes her position on the only possible response to determinative metaphor through her ordering of the novellas that make up the text *Four Ways to Forgiveness*. If the desperation of the situation that exists on Yeowe comes to fruition in "A Man of the People," the women's answer to the determinative metaphors, both historical and current, exists in that final novella "A Woman's Liberation." Le Guin posits all rebellion as starting with the individual subject, as presented in the singular nature of the liberation. That is not to say that we work alone; rather, as Le Guin makes clear, it is only as subjects – single voices and bodies that recognize ourselves as individual selves – that we can approach the massive force that exists in determinative metaphor, that misnaming that insists we are not subject but, rather, objects to be used and organized. As such, Khoury's disappointment with Le Guin's positing of a new world in Shevek's single realization is unseated because status as a subject rather than object is a state that must be sought first, as an individual, and only then, as a community of individuals. Le Guin makes no claim that the subject individual is some sanctified state, merely that it is a necessary step to community.

QUEER THEORY AND JUDITH BUTLER

Le Guin has dealt with multiple forms of sexuality and gender alternatives through much of her career including homosexual interactions in (even) *The*

Dispossessed, a text often criticized for its celebration of a monogamous, heteronormative, central relationship, as well as the struggles of the lesbian protagonist of *The Telling* who finds herself in a society that has morphed into a repressive, traditionalist autocracy during her voyage to reach her post. However, the first text in her oeuvre to garner attention for dealing with gender alterity was *The Left Hand of Darkness.* Despite criticism over the use of the pronoun "he" and her decision not to bring a sexual relationship between the two protagonists to fruition, what is quite astounding in the novel is the way in which Le Guin's metaphorical structure mirrors Judith Butler's work with performativity within Queer Theory. According to Butler's work, hegemonic dictates limit both sexuality and gender construction through an interconnected structure of performative words that lead to a nearly unavoidable performance of a limited number of preconstructed and circumscribed gender roles. Interestingly, and despite being written decades before Butler's work, *The Left Hand of Darkness* creates a network of metaphors that enact the relationships Butler describes, while still resting on the consent that any metaphor requires.

As discussed earlier, the unknown is a foundational trope and a necessary component of the most important philosophical relationship within the novel. As such, metaphorical representations of the unknown exist in all sorts of material imagery: the Ekumen, space, the other, and – for the purposes of this chapter – the "ice."[89] The journey across the ice for Genly and Estraven is of course a

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[89] Naomi Jacobs notes that the ice as an important metaphor in the text because "it tests their loyalty as well as their endurance, creating a bond of brother hood" (Frozen, 199) responding to Le Guin's

metaphorical representation of a trip into the unknown, but for the purposes of this chapter, that unknown becomes a specific unknown, the unknown of the exterior that exists outside social norms and beyond regulation. Butler's discussion of excrement – of shit – and of the way exteriority functions in relation to normative practices suggests that positions within and without society produce identities determined by the position of the individual relative to the border between inner and outer:

> What constitutes through division of the 'inner' and 'outer' worlds of the subject is a border and boundary tenuously maintained for the purposes of social regulation and control. The boundary between the inner and outer is confounded by those excremental passages in which the inner effectively becomes outer, and this excreting function becomes, as it were, the model by which other forms of identity- differentiation are accomplished. In effect, this is the mode by which Others become shit. (182)

As such, Butler represents the social body as constructed not unlike the human body, one that is permeable and far more interconnected to the outer world than we often care to think. Air, food, ideas, and excrement breach that boundary calling into question the reality of the separateness we value as determining self and individuality; with separateness in question, it is that mirror image as separate from both Other and self that allows for that definition (Lacan, 1286). As such, position, whether that position is inside the social world or outside its regulation, is an

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statement that LHD is a book "about betrayal and fidelity" (Gender, 161). Although this is irrefutable, the field of trust is a discussion of the unknown, and I am arguing that regardless of the author's intention, the trope of the unknown is much broader than this discussion suggests.

important factor in determining what is within reach, including any possible changes to those norms within the "body," whether that body is a being or a society.

Genly and Estraven make the decision to cross the Gobrin ice field – a choice only made in desperation as success is possible only if the winds and fates agree, as Estraven states overtly in his comment that "Without luck, we will not make it" (202) – because both of the protagonists have been re-categorized as outlaws. The categorization is a determinative misnaming that has leapt past impertinent and pertinent predication – and of course, consent of the referent – to a rigid recategorization within the countries who have applied those determinative metaphorical transformations. Estraven has been exiled from Karhide, but as well, his last acts in Mishnory will earn him assassination or incarceration if he does not leave quickly: "Until I went to Shusgis, no one in the Sarf but Guam had considered me worthy their notice, but now they would be hard at my heels" (185). Genly, on the other hand has been "disappeared" and exists only as an invisible prisoner whose re-emergence would be a national scandal. That the two consider themselves outlaws[90] is put beyond question when they respond to questions of their identity at the end of the trip with "One person may be outlawed in Karhide, another in Orgoreyn" (273). Their choices and behavior signal both their own comprehension of their outlawed state, and the relative meaning of an outlaw status – that to be an outlaw is a position of exteriority without necessarily attached judgement or value.

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[90] It is worth noting that, although neither of the two believe that s/he is guilty of any wrong doing, both have already accepted the misnaming, and thus, each recognizes her/his repositioning in the social organism.

To Karhide, Estraven is, metaphorically, excrement and has been excreted through his exile; in other words, through his exile, he is removed from the body politic and the nation as a whole. Genly, on the other hand, is kept within the body of Orgoreyn while moved from the center to the invisible margin, but in his refusal of that control, when Estraven breaks him out of Pulfen Farm, both he and Estraven are excreted by the social body into the unknown – the Gobrin Ice. Although apparently a choice, it is a choice for which the only other option is death creating that double-bind as discussed by Frye.

Not only is the Gobrin outside of the social structures of the two nations, it exists only as an unknown. Unmapped (Estraven's limited map of the area is inaccurate) and untracked, the Gobrin exists as a space outside Gethen social structures, a space where little to nothing is predictable; as such, regulation falls away. Set apart and separate from the rest of the Gethen, the ice acts as a position in which change can occur (admittedly that change includes a likely death), a space where alterity becomes possible, and as such, the future becomes slippery and even less predictable than its already unpredictable state. As such the metaphor of the ice corresponds with Butler's discussion of drag. If change is impossible within a social structure that insists on a hegemonic determination of gender, then one must leave that space/structure to make even small changes. In Le Guin's novel that leave taking exists as the materialized metaphor that is the trip across the Gobrin, and in Butler's text, in the performance of drag.

According to Butler, the performance of drag creates both a material space in which the rigid constructions of gender are destabilized such that they can be questioned, and as well, a perspective shimmy that allows cognitive space for alternative possibilities, and it is only in combination of that material and immaterial that such a space can exist. Butler quotes Esther Newton's discussion of drag as a complex whole that repeatedly reverses itself:

> At its most complex, [drag] is a double inversion that says, "appearance is an illusion." Drag says . . . "my 'outside' appearance is feminine, but my essence 'inside' [my body] is masculine." At the same time it symbolizes the opposite inversion; "my appearance 'outside' [my body, my gender] is masculine but my essence 'inside' [myself] is feminine." (186)

Butler continues Newton's logical progression to note that the very existence of drag as imitation opens a space in which *gender as imitation* can exist: "*In imitation gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself*" revealing gender as "falsely naturalized as a unity" (187). The desired unity is in fact a determinative metaphor that disallows change and manufactures consent to that refusal of change – a connecting of a material fact (the body) with a specific and unalterable immaterial reading (the gender). As Butler notes, drag's disruption between the "three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance" suggests a "dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance" (187). The dissonance then creates an instability (the perspective shimmy) that

allows for a failure of the determinative metaphor, that misnaming and then metaphorized relationship: i.e. that naturalized reading of a gendered body as stable and tethered to a specific corporality. The hegemonic norms are dependent on that unity – that rigid, determinative and metaphorized relationship as a whole, and as that unity becomes unstable, the norm becomes questionable.

This need for unity is also the basis of Genly's distrust of Estraven, that previously discussed assumption of de Beauvoir's "Eternal Feminine" (ibid), that rigid association between a specific corporality and an associated hegemonic ideological understanding of that corporal state. Regardless of all the attempts of both characters to work together, Genly is not able to trust Estraven because he insists on viewing Estraven as a recognizable unity – i.e. strictly male or strictly female – and falls into distrust and dysfunction with each interaction that does not subscribe to his expectations. Only outside of the recognizable world – outside society as a structure both material and ideological – can Genly make effective change in his interaction with gender, and thus with Estraven; only in a tent in an entirely alien space and disconnected from the hegemonic norms created from determinative metaphor can Genly see what he "had always been afraid to see, and had pretended not to see in him [Estraven]: that he was a woman as well as a man" (248).[91] In terms of metaphor, what is interesting here is the layered response of material body and metaphor to the layered existence of material setting and

[91] Again, Genly use of the pronoun "he" and his tendency to use the word "man" as a general denomination of all Gethenians has been criticized roundly in a number of responses to Le Guin's text. But, considering the argument I am making in this chapter, for Genly, with all his hegemonic baggage, to do otherwise would compromise the characterization and damage the text.

metaphorical space created by the fading of the rigid determinative metaphors that are read as the only ideological possibility attached to a particular body when that body is within the social structures that determine its meaning. What is available on the Gobrin, which is not available within the rigid hegemonic reading that exists in regulated space, is the moment of consent that determinative and effaced metaphors disallow and that living metaphor requires. So, as metaphor is so very dangerous in both determinative and effaced states, the question at this point becomes whether or not the relationship between material body and immaterial or unmeasurable forces can be continued without metaphor, and Le Guin's answer is that it cannot.

One of the most effective metaphors employed by Le Guin at this point in the novel is a specific extension of a system of tropes used throughout the text: the shadow. Le Guin's metaphorical shadow is produced as a master trope, but not a determinative or effaced metaphor as it is closely linked to and accurately reflective of the ideas and material components that make up the metaphorical whole. For the Gethenians, shadows are linked to the social code that structures all relationships in Gethen, from interpersonal to political: shiefgrethor. As previously discussed, shiefgrethor is explained by Estraven as a complex form of reputation through his implementation of the metaphor of the shadow: a product of a combination of light and corporality to produce a shape within the social space that is connected to the corporal body, caused by a relationship between the corporal body and light, but not a part of that corporal body. Le Guin extends this metaphor in several different ways throughout the text, including Genly's confusion and frustration at his inability to reach any kind of lasting contact as he continues to attempt to interact with the

Commensals of Orgoreyn to no avail, stating that it is "as if they did not cast shadows" (147). Here associated with a lack of transparency in the political fields of Mishnory that disallows meaningful discussion and lets slip accountability for actions within that political field, Le Guin then moves the metaphor of "shadow" to a linked form of the metaphor on the Gobrin as the two protagonists move through weather in which flat light creates a shadowless landscape, "the unshadow" (266), making it difficult if not impossible to move, an important fact and an important metaphor.

The various semic fields that underlie the metaphor of the shadow – depth of field, relationship with light, shape, form, etc. – overlap, to create a fluid and yet connected metaphorical network. That network produces a logical strata that creates a system of shadows within the text that allows the reader to create an interlinked conception of the ways in which shadows are both materially and metaphorically productive. For the protagonists, the lack of material shadows is productive of a moment in which they step outside the world and into "an even, white, soundless sphere: we moved along inside a huge frosted-glass ball. There was nothing inside the ball, and nothing was outside of it" (265). In that space movement is difficult, requires a tether to one's traveling companion, and is exhausting, *but also*, in learning to move in that space, new and alternative relationships are discovered. In other words, although it is extremely difficult to move through space when that space is "nothing," that "nothing" allows for alterity.

Within that "shadowless" space that exists on the Gobrin, Genly and Estraven reach a relationship that is unreachable within a society where every move they make has political repercussions. Only on the Gobrin is Genly able to understand Estraven as both male and female; only on the Gobrin is Estraven able to accept his own permeable self through "mindspeak." The Gobrin exists in the text as a form of other space in which metaphor is a productive connector of "I and thou" – living rather than determinative or effaced and a method of control – as suggested in the way Genly remembers the time spent in extremity as one of joy:

> Sometimes as I am falling asleep in a dark, quiet room I have for a moment a great and treasurable illusion of the past. The wall of a tent leans up over my face, not visible but audible, a slanting plane of faint sound: the susurrus of blown snow. Nothing can be seen. The light-emission of the Chabe stove is cut off, and it exists only as a sphere of heat, a heart of warmth. The faint dampness and confining cling of my sleeping-bag; the sound of the snow; barely audible, Estraven's breathing as he sleeps; darkness. Nothing else. We are inside, the two of us, in shelter, at rest, at the center of all things. . . .I am not trying to say that I was happy, during those weeks of hauling a sledge across an ice-sheet in the dead of winter. . . I certainly wasn't happy. Happiness has to do with reason, and only reason earns it. What I was given was the thing you can't earn, and can't keep, and often don't even recognize at the time: I mean joy. (240-241)

The system of living metaphors that are the shadow and the ice act as access to the immaterial and the unmeasurable, a fact that prompts Le Guin to avoid the move to a more material connection for the characters – that unfulfilled sexual potential.

Le Guin chooses to create a situation in which becoming sexual partners would change an already precarious situation, and so, the two protagonists choose not to have sex, citing the dangers in doing so, and that refusal of sex produces unforeseen and metaphorical benefits: "For it seemed to me, and I think to him, that it was from that sexual tension between us, admitted now and understood, but not assuaged, the great and sudden assurance of friendship between us rose: a friendship so much needed by us both in our exile" (248). In making this choice, Le Guin creates a relationship between the characters which does not allow explanation through pointing to an overt relationship between bodies; rather, the less material nature of the bond requires living metaphor in any kind of explanation. Le Guin even places the relationship as a center that exists outside the bodies and minds of the two protagonists; in making the chabe stove the center of the relationship, in making it the "heart of warmth" (ibid) around which Genly memory is centered, Le Guin's metaphor insists on a decentered conception of the relationship between the two. As well, the discussion as to whether to change their relationship to a sexual one is carefully negotiated and consented to in a mirrored presentation of the consent necessary to all of Le Guin's metaphors. Through their mutual consent to their friendship, that "heart of warmth" (ibid) comes into existence; through mutual consent, metaphor allows us to understand another's conception of the world.

Only in a space beyond the social spaces of Gethen can such a discussion take place, can such choices exist as viable. In making those choices, the protagonists choose as well, their own gender and emotional constructions that remain after their return to "civilization," just as Butler suggests that drag acts as a space where choices that present alterity can be "chosen" on the stage in which gender is revealed to be imitative and thus susceptible to choice. That those spaces are profoundly connected to metaphor and metaphorical representation of self and body seems clear as soon as one destabilizes the connection between gender and body.

THE METAPHOR IN THE I

All the forms of identity with which Le Guin engages suggest the need for the "I," both the narrative "I" and the "I" within the narration of another. That that "I" is itself a metaphorical position is suggested by Estraven's disconnect and loss of balance when faced with "mind-speak." His utter loss of balance in the face of permeability is a recognition of the delineation of the "I" as merely a metaphorical methodology with which to face the world. That we exist as a separate whole is a position that is in need of constant reconsideration. Where exactly does that boundary lie? At what point does the air we breath cease to be a part of the environment and become strictly a part of our bodies? The same question can be asked about food, liquid, and even ideas. What are the limits and parameters of our selves, and how do we make those claims without calling into question the

parameters of others? – and not just human others, but all others, including the planet. Le Guin's work presents us with these questions as not yet answered and in need of consideration. She reminds us that all of our conceptions of self are metaphors – misnamings that we have decided to look on as pertinent predications – and she suggests that the greatest dangers in naming those parameters lay in the creation of determinative metaphors that become metaphorized and invisible segments of language.

Chapter Four

Something from Nothing: Acts of Creation in Le Guin's *The Telling*.

We tell Aristotelian stories, and we are compelled to do so, possibly because of longstanding habit or because of the way we have been taught to interact with the world or perhaps simply as a response to the way in which our cognition organizes that which we see. Certainly, our construction of stories, our acts of emplotment, our insistence on the scaffolding of "beginning," "middle" and "end" allow us to "shape our confused, formless, and in the last resort mute temporal experience" (sic) (Ricoeur, *Text*, 5-6). We then organize those stories into genre, "culturally constructed" categories that "rest on the binary between what is normal and what is deviant" (Baccolin, 519). In other words, we organize our comprehension into structures that offer solutions and resolutions, structures that offer comprehension and determine the parameters of that comprehension. But what if there is no solution, no final resolution that when reached allows us to dust off our palms and walk away? What if we are always in the process and that process is so large it cannot be encompassed in any fully defined manner? How do our stories work for us if they have no endings? And perhaps most important of all – where does metaphor come into the equation?

In Ursula K. Le Guin's novel *The Telling*, the author suggests that subversion of hierarchy and the creation of a collective require alternative structures and alternative interactions, that to create an understanding of the world that includes all members of a community takes a multiplicity of stories and a nearly endless number

of styles of "telling" – a multiplicity of moments of consent that include a willingness to accept a lack of closure and/or a failure to resolve complex interactions. Subversion of hierarchy requires a willingness to make peace with the risk associated with both the alternative and the unknown. She suggests as well, that to do so is necessary, to do so is the only way to interact with our material environment as a whole. As well, Le Guin suggests to do so we must employ living metaphor,[92] not only in explaining the content of these stories, not only in the way in which we construct our stories, but as well, to construct a world that allows for what is yet to be created, in which creation must exist as a position that allows for a functional relationship between body and world. Such a relationship is made possible within living metaphor because in the repeated pattern of movement from impertinent predication to newly pertinent predication and the consent required by that interaction the world is reconstructed. In *The Telling*, Le Guin offers interactions that suggest that to reach that functional relationship between word and world, we must include in living metaphor the particularized form of materialized metaphor – a form of metaphor that creates a moment during which the literal meets the figurative to exist as layered and resonant such that it can become the un/imaginable.

The imaginable and the unimaginable are so closely linked in this text that they are not separable; rather, for Sutty on Aka, imagination must be expanded on a daily basis. Sutty literally cannot imagine the things that she sees because of a lack

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[92] For the purposes of this chapter, the use of the unmodified term metaphor will at times stand in for "living metaphor."

of reference, yet as that catalogue of reference expands, her ability to imagine also expands so that the imaginable and the unimaginable inhabit the same space. Her state suggests that the act of imagination is a complete interconnection and coordinated interaction between world and viewer in which sight and imagination must work in tandem. In other words, to be able to see/observe we must be able to imagine that which we see. The moment when the unimaginable is observed is a moment of Suvin's cognitive estrangement and as well, a moment when the imagination must "catch up" in order that what is viewed can be accepted. In the text's use of materialized metaphor, Le Guin reflects the tension between science and the unknown (as well as the potentially unknowable) and suggests that what appears to be faith and mysticism, with the extension of the imagination that allows a reflection of what has been observed, can instead exist as the expansion/access that allows for an interaction with that which is beyond reason – i.e. the unmeasurable, the unknown, and the unknowable. In the case of materialized metaphor, the consent necessary in metaphor is twofold in that, beyond the usual consent between the transmitter, receiver, and referent, there must also be an earlier moment of consent offered by the imaginer to the expansion of her/his imagination such that the new moment in which the metaphor becomes a material act can be accepted. In other words, materialized metaphor exists as a moment when imagination and metaphor work in tandem to – quite literally – recreate the material world, an act that mirrors the way we create/recreate our stories.

Le Guin has certainly structured *The Telling* within the agreed upon western standard of story telling, but the interior stories that construct the core knowledge-

bank of the community of Aka and the central quest of the text are non-linear, non-Aristotelian in their structure. There are a few notable exceptions to this traditional style in Le Guin's work, like the texts "It was a Dark and Stormy Night; Or, Why Are We Huddling about the Campfire?" and *Always Coming Home.*[93] Both are nonlinear, multi-perspective discussions concerning story telling and its function in creating differentiation, and thus allow the storytellers to avoid "disolv[ing] entirely into his surroundings" (Le Guin, *Dark*, 198). But in general, Le Guin's novels, stories, and essays are usually recognizably Aristotelian, with the familiar scaffolding of traditional tales that produce each move through beginning, middle, and ending, and make use of conflict and crisis, rising action and dénouement. That said, within its recognizable structure, *The Telling* incorporates many other styles of storytelling, instructions and guidelines that comprise "the Telling," the oral and written collection of knowledge that acts as library, archive, and instructional guide to those who take part in the religion/culture of the Rangma of Aka.

WHAT THERE IS TO KNOW

The "Telling" is the "religion"[94] that has existed on the planet Aka for the thousands of years preceding contact with the Ekumen (community of planets) –

[93] *Always Coming Home* seems to be an experiment that mirrors many of the patterns of "the Telling" in *The Telling*. With a culture safeguarded in and expanded by multiple views, multiple tellers, and multiple forms of telling, the people of the valley interact within a network of culture that is interconnected with everything they do, much as is true for the Rangma of The *Telling*.

[94] Religion is a fraught term in this text. As will be discussed later in this chapter, Sutty spends much of her time determining whether "the Telling" is a religion or not, moving back and forth between a presumption that it must be to relief that it is not, settling finally on the less loaded term "system." However, I will continue to use the term religion on occasion and in combination with others because the "system" is so complex as to make the use of any single term too one-dimensional.

specifically Terra – whose bungled interaction has sparked an aggressive move to technology on Aka which has prompted a ban on the "old things. . . Old worlds, old ways" (Le Guin, TT, 95). The ban is problematic as well as difficult to enforce because "the Telling" is non-Aristotelian in its communication, and as such, it is not structured in the same manner as any of the major, recognizable religions[95] – i.e. through narrative – such that it has no single sanctified story or text – "No bible. No Koran. Dozens of Upanishads, a million sutras" (110) – and has no certified leaders: "religion as an institution demanding belief and claiming authority . . . had never existed on Aka" (105). As such, it contains beginnings that appear to be middles, and rising action that has little to do with the close of the tale, and the endings that exist are merely next steps in the process at hand.

Peopled by protagonists who are identifiable despite their switch of gender, personality, and attributes, and despite the apparent incoherence, each segment or tale of "the Telling" seems to hint at a kernel of meaning: "these stories weren't gospel. They weren't Truth. They were essays at the truth" (184). This complex polyglossia creates what Ricoeur calls "a *functional* unity among the multiple narrative modes and genres" (*Text*, 2), offering an array of perspective and choice as to approaches to the surrounding world that work together and act as a connecting network and a foundation to the necessary codes. Each a part of the underpinning of the banned religioculture, the myriad stories of "the Telling" are non-linear and

[95] Of the major religions, "the Telling" most closely resembles Buddhism or Taoism in its lack of a deity, funeral traditions, and overall tone – a fact that Sutty herself notes (102) – but even that resemblance has limitations, as Aka's religion is not recognizable as a religion at all in that it is older, more expansive, and more process oriented, requiring no belief, loyalty or penance.

belong to no single person; rather, there are literally as many stories as there are adherents, and as well, those stories are rife with metaphor: human bodies are trees, “the Telling” is a mountain or a forest or a jungle (111), etc., etc. As each story is told by a particular member of the community, the particularity of the story telling requires the expansion of the imagination of the listener – or listeners – in order that s/he be able to comprehend what is told. As such, living metaphor is both unavoidable and remains “living” metaphor in that the metaphor must be reinvented with each new addition of a particular participant. Also, as such, the “stories” often leave the listener/reader with unanswered questions and little sense of completion, suggesting simply a next step rather than a completed journey. That said, despite the metaphor of the journey with its suggestion of a linear teleology, the components of “the Telling” are not linear in their connection to the religioculture or – as Sutty, the protagonist, prefers – the “system” (103), yet each tale – each version of each tale – works in combination with the vast array of other versions, other tales, other versions of other tales, etc., etc.

What the maz (those educated in “the Telling”) have to share is widely variable, and although largely communicated in storytelling form, covers a vast variety of knowledge and skills. As an observer for the Ekumen, Sutty attempts to listen and record the various maz – all of whom are willing to share – but finds the multiplicity of what there is to “know” confusing in its variety:

> Some of them, specialists in ceremonies, resembled the priests of conventional Terran religions, officiating at the rites of passage, marriages, funerals . . .Some maz were physicians, healers, herbalists, or botanists. .

> .Some maz worked mostly with books: they taught children and adults to write and read ideograms, they taught the texts and ways of understanding them. (114)

The more Sutty observes, the more pieces and variety of form she finds, but in her attempts to comprehend, she is regularly pulled aside to a version of what she believes must exist – the core precept: “Early in the winter she thought she had found the central texts of the system in a series of poems and treatises called *The Arbor*” (110). However, she is reminded, despite a willingness “to be lost there for years,” that “this isn’t the Telling, this is just a part of it, just a small part of it . . .” (111). In fact, for much of the novel, Sutty’s collection of “knowledge” seems to be not just confusing in its incoherence, but in fact, incomprehensible as a whole: “How did it all hang together? Was there any relation at all among these disparate things?” (115). The problem is, of course, one that Le Guin’s work brings up repeatedly – that of scale. “The Telling” is, in essence, non-linear segments of a collective knowing so large as to be unknowable as a whole and even unapproachable if one approaches without metaphor.

METAPHOR AND SCALE

The “Telling” is a system so vast that, as Sutty finds in her attempts to organize the information she is offered, “the incoherence of it all was staggering” (Le Guin, TT, 115). So, despite the fact that we and the protagonist are tempted to effect an organization of the huge collection (as if it were a kind of jigsaw puzzle) in the hopes that if we can just sort out the tales, recognize the metaphors, and create

some kind of order so that we may begin to comprehend what this collection means, the text makes clear, internally to Sutty and externally to the reader that, although one can "know" a portion of what is available, one cannot know everything. In fact, the information gains value as the knower accepts her/his limitations and turns to the collective, reimagining the management/exploration of knowledge as a shared task: "She knew now that all she would ever know of the Telling was the least hint or fragment of what there was to know. But that was all right; that was how it was" (198). So, rather than order as a central organizing point, fluidity becomes the position from which one must work when engaging with a system that is neither temporally stable nor comprehensive as a whole. In the shifts and flow of "the Telling" remains a profoundly comprehensive "system" that by the very nature of the form must adjust to each new moment, each new participant – a form that mirrors almost exactly that of living metaphor. In fact, the grand metaphor of *The Telling* is incorporated in the very size of the "system," in the paradox of knowledge as unknowable – certainly as a single subject, a solitary "knower" – including in that construction the need to accept what cannot be known (contained or owned), and a comprehension that in that acknowledgement there is a need for a reversal in our relationship with the act of knowing – an inverted ontology, as it were.

Within the fictional structure that underpins *The Telling*, rather than treating knowledge as a collectible substance, Le Guin/the members of the community treat knowledge as a field of nearly infinite expanse, or as Quantum Field Theory suggests, "a large number of degrees of freedom" (Kuhlmann, np), freedom which, in this case, exists as differentiation. From the perspective that defines knowledge as

a field, it (knowledge) cannot be acquired or owned; it can only be visited, interacted with, or made use of, a position that changes our sense of entitlement – i.e. our relationship with that knowledge – and is not unlike Martin Heidegger's discussion of our relationship with technology in which he notes that within the context of technological relationships "even the Rhine itself appears as something at our command" (7). Our environment, the very planet we live on, and – in the case of knowledge – our relationship with what is known become merely economic and technological resources over which we have control. Such a position is skewed, creating a breakdown in the network of relationships which ends in disaster, as presented in the producer/consumer government of Dovza in the novel in which students are defined by how many cups of "akakafi" they consume and "[n]obody talk[s] about reading or course material" (66). Such an approach to knowledge produces a closed relationship, denying the effect of the participants because an ownership relationship suggests that knowledge is stable and the transmitter and receiver add nothing to the equation.

In opposition to the community at Dovza, the Rangma, the alternative community on Aka, whose interactions with the world are based on "the Telling," functions within a reversal of this consumer/owner relationship with the world and knowledge, and in doing so, switches that owner relationship with knowledge to one of shared maintenance in which the members of the community act as collective librarians, archivists, and member/users. Such a relationship creates a system by which both the access to the "library" and tasks in maintenance of the "library" remain fluid, variable, shared, and – often – exist as materialized metaphors. In such

a system, the knowledge imparted by "the Telling" acts in material ways and is also maintained in material ways by both the institutions and the single members of the institution, just as it is metaphorically maintained in the minds and the community of the single members of the Rangma community as well as in the community as a whole. The reversal that exists in the relationship between those who take part in "the Telling" and "the Telling" as a whole requires an acknowledgement of the fact that what one knows at any given time is merely a fragment of what can be discovered – one of those "degrees of freedom" – in that field as well as a recognition of the variability that comes with the added interaction of each participant, something that may slip away or change in the changing moment. Such a relationship necessitates a multiplicity of views that both recognize the immediate knowledge (the particle) and the greater unknown (the field), and that even minimal comprehension of the field requires multiple positions within that field as well as multiple "knowers," as each "knower" changes the knowledge with which s/he interacts and, as such, insists upon the collective as necessary to knowledge and knowing, while recognizing the resulting and necessary fluidity that the interchange creates.

In Le Guin's text, each of the maz (the educated/educators) recognizes that s/he has only a tiny piece to offer, and none hoard their knowledge: "So far she had met no arcane wisdoms in the Telling, no holy secrets that could be told only to adepts, no knowledge withheld to fortify the authority of the learned, magnify their sanctity, or increase their fees" (116). In fact, the lack of arcane knowledge or the refusal to hoard knowledge in an attempt to gain authority is antithetical to "the

Telling" itself because "the Telling" cannot exist in a hierarchical form. The present state of affairs, in which the old ways are banned, is in direct relation to the changes to "the Telling" that have been the result of an attempt to reconstruct it in hierarchical form. When the "barbarian" (178) tribes of the plains began to incorporate themselves into "the Telling" they brought with them antithetical practices, creating acceptable usury and "boss maz" allowing inherited positions instead of allowing "the Telling" to flow: "they made the maz into bosses, with the power to rule and punish. Gave maz the power to tax. . . They made the sons of maz all maz, by birth" (179). The resulting backlash is insurrection and a concerted effort to destroy all of the "old ways" (ibid), to destroy "the Telling." Logically speaking, "the Telling" becomes an altered and destructive form in becoming hierarchical because the very structures of hierarchy depend upon the stasis that keeps the elements of that hierarchy in position – not "the Telling" at all. By nature and definition, "the Telling" is fluid and cannot exist in the stasis of hierarchy. As shared, any one position is limited and becomes fluid only in interconnection with the whole, allowing the overall construct the ability to expand beyond what a static construction can support, and so, "The Telling" is a network rather than a hierarchy, a network of a scale that means any one position is merely a part of the whole – allowing the whole to become vast indeed.

In the recognition of one's limited position within "the Telling," each of the maz acts as caretaker rather than possessor of the knowledge s/he "Tells" putting no limits on who can access/visit/use said knowledge. Only as a group, only in interconnected existence does the knowledge exist as a whole, and all newcomers

are welcome, as is made clear by Sutty's reception by the members she visits and interviews. "The Telling," by definition, is a group effort and as such expands what can be known while the very size of the known requires that it exists in the metaphors of connection that occur over and over again in the text:

> . . . it was a marvelously painted map or mandala of the One that is Two giving rise to the Three, to the Five, to the Myriad again to the Five, the Three, the Two, the One . . . A Tree, a Body, a Mountain, inscribed within the circle that was everything and nothing. (130)

The repeated doubling followed by the reversal back to "the One" followed by the myriad metaphorical replacements suggests the structure of "the Telling" as a whole, a simultaneously extant and intricately interwoven system of knowing – a collective ontology that must be shared because it is a relationship that depends upon the collective to exist, each field of knowledge cannot be a possession and access is, by definition, offered to and dependant on the collective group, i.e. the whole.

HOW TO KNOW

The reversal of the relationship to knowledge from ownership to shared trust allows for an acceptance of the fact that knowledge cannot be encompassed within a single self and gains both scope and depth in the shared management of what is known, in that the knowledge shifts and reflects differences each time the viewer visits or that visitor shifts. Just as utopia must be reinvented in each interaction as the participants carry forward what is understood to be adapted to the next utopic exchange creating an immense interconnected range of utopic moments which are

not entirely visible as a whole although the state of that whole effects each next moment, "the Telling" can only be told in snippets and glimpses which are offered in non-linear stories that exist within a pattern too large to discern, such that it must be posited in an array of views ("knowers"). As the individual recognizes the limits of his or her portion the whole becomes larger yet: "We are the world. We're its language. So we live and it lives. You see? If we don't say the words, what is there in our world?" (142). It is, as Sutty notes, "[a] world made of words" (127), but as such, it is a world so huge that despite the fact – or perhaps because – it is made of words it overlaps and affects all the world it touches, as metaphor and material world overlap allowing access to both the material and immaterial. As such, for those trying to control that world, living metaphor, and in particular materialized metaphor is the enemy, as noted by the Monitor as he attempts to limit Sutty's movement and, more generally, her interaction with the field of knowledge she is exploring – that is "The Telling."

The Monitor is a displaced adherent of the "old ways," and, in playing out the trope of refusal, in a response to his displacement he has become a fanatic in his refusal of that which he has lost. As such, he dogs Sutty in her travels, warning her in his exclamations that she should not "betray" the comunocapitalist "Corporation" that acts as government to Aka (Le Guin, TT, 93). However, embedded in his warnings are statements about the relationship between language and governance: "They [the followers of the old ways] are the enemies of truth, of science. Their so-called knowledge is rant, superstition, and poetry" (92). The Monitor's inclusion of poetry is an indication of the scope of metaphor, that metaphor is a "displacement

and . . .extension of the meaning of words" (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 1), and as such, it is also a creative force through its relationship with predication. Metaphor can be a "one word trope," a replacement, but can also exist as an "interaction" which in the context of discussion of the non-literally discussable allows new meaning, as outlined in "interaction theory" (*Rule*, 75) which Ricoeur attributes to Max Black (Ricoeur, Metaphorical, 143) in which "the predicative act. . . points to an extra-linguistic reality which is its referent" (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 256) rather than a mere replacement of one object for another or an object for a simple abstract. Thus, as an extension[96] of meaning, metaphor becomes necessary in a consideration of that which is unmeasurable – in this case, specifically within many interactions of "the Telling" – (an anathema in modern Aka as a society based on measurement and definition) in that it (metaphor) allows for language to exist as a form of reference to replace that of measurement as a standard by which to comprehend the state to which one refers.

In a space that exists between the world and the word, the idea of metaphor becomes a metaphor within the metalanguage (Jakobsen, Aphasia, 235) that allows for discussion of the implicit structures that underlie the explicit structures of control in Aka as well as in those unmeasurable interactions of which "the Telling" consists. However, because "the Telling" is unmeasurable and exists within metaphor, the monitor is on a fruitless mission, as the very structures he relies on deny the possibility of the unmeasurable and so denies "the Telling" itself, and thus, "the

[96] Again, although metaphor is less centered than the words "extension" and "expansion" suggest – that "extra-linguistic reality" (ibid) – for the purposes of this discussion, I will continue to use the terms.

Telling" slips sideways through metaphor and remains out of reach in the daily interactions of the people. After all, how does one ban exercise because it is one of the "old ways" (ibid)? How does one ban a recipe for breakfast because it exists as sedition? In his attempts to catch Sutty in her interactions with "the Telling," the Monitor – who understands the nature of the Telling far more fully than other agents of the government and thus recognizes moments of the Telling others do not – is made ridiculous, spinning in circles and finally refused by his own government because they believe he is chasing ghosts. Yet there is no question that these seemingly innocuous actions are part of "the Telling" and have a dual life that spans daily interactions through metaphor to the unmeasurable that exists in the grand multi-temporal, multi-viewed system that is "the Telling." As such, metaphor acts as a bridge that allows the "system" to survive despite the repressive attempts of the government. In that relationship between metaphor and survival lies the narrative of Sutty's escape from her past and the limitations of monotheism.

Sutty's greatest obstacle and the dilemma that has placed her deep in depression at the start of the novel is a loss created through the replacement of living metaphor with effaced and determinative metaphors – i.e. a loss of consent in the way her life is constructed. As discussed earlier, such a replacement is a mode used by many systems that attempt to control and limit their citizens through the standardization of the message and terms of the ruling ideology such that it creates stasis rather than interaction; the "consent" necessary is manufactured through "educative pressure . . . applied to single individuals so as to obtain their consent and their collaboration, turning necessity and coercion into 'freedom'" (Gramsci, 502).

Such coercion is presented in Le Guin's text in the shouting students who meet for endless cups of akakafi (66) and in the rhetoric of the monitor who has replaced his early education with the slogans of the party. In attempting to escape the polarized, restrictive government and hegemony of Terra, Sutty has chosen to work within the rich tapestry that is the ancient culture of the planet Aka but arrives to find a replica of the society which she has left behind. Despite the fact that Terra has been under the punitive and restrictive religion/government of the "Unists" and Aka is rabidly secular in its communocapitalist government, the two are equally and similarily restrictive. Aka, with its ZIL cards that track citizens and its ban on the "old ways," reflects the deterministic methodologies of a combination of 20th century communist USSR and capitalist USA, but it also reflects Aristotelian story structures without the freedom and expansion allowed for by living metaphor, replacing said metaphor with its rigid relatives, effaced and determinative metaphor, both of which refuse change and deny difference; all of which, sets up a polarized binary.

On Aka, within the Dovza norms, the measurable and the immeasurable exist in a polarized binary in that there is no interaction between the two except that of elision. Thus, one must prove one is "modern" by refusing the "old ways" as made clear in the Monitor's demand noted previously that Sutty understand that the proponents of the "old ways" are "the enemies of truth" who employ "poetry" in their sedition (ibid). His claim is a statement about the way "the Telling" interconnects living metaphor and linguistic function within poetry, and in consequence, the adherents of "the Telling" are not restricted to the literal and definitive. There is no irony in his claim to the ownership of truth; as a

representative of the government the monitor is expressing his need for a determinist understanding of reality, a necessary component in Aka's technologically aggressive "PRODUCER-CONSUMERS. . .MARCH TO THE STARS" (7)[97] as the propaganda has it, and within such determinism, poetry and metaphor are not allowable in their implied ambiguity as well as the resulting complexity which gives voice to the literally ambiguous interactions of the community.

Simplicity and clarity are necessary to any polarized dualism, and Dovza, deep in its monotheistic ideology in which capitalism has been placed in the position of deity, has created just such a polarized binary between the literal and the figurative. Within that binary, only the literal – the science – is allowed, but of course, with the loss of the figurative, subtlety and complexity are lost as well and – in consequence of the loss of the other two and most important of all – accuracy is also lost. As Le Guin suggests in any number of texts, polarized binaries are non-dynamic and function in a limited manner and only for the few. This narrowing of the privileged/valued community is a result of the fact that an effaced or determinative metaphor both allow for and necessitates a narrowing of meaning and a creation of stasis that requires in turn static and limited standards; as such, the polarized binary creates a need for the foreclosure of the relationship with the unknown allowed for, and in fact, sought after in living metaphor.[98]

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[97] The propaganda of the "Corporation" expressed in the text as effaced and determinative metaphors is represented by a shout of capital letters.

[98] As discussed earlier, both effaced and determinative metaphors are often produced by a desire – specifically in this text, desire for measurable and explicit standards – and are always used as a means of control. To reiterate, effaced metaphors consist of a displacement of the original metaphor through the disconnect between metaphor and referent. Determinative metaphor is constructed without reference to a "fabulous scene" (Derrida, 11) from which other metaphor is originally produced, but is instead the product of a desired recategorization that exists as a means to an end. In both cases, the

THE SILENCE OF THE POLARIZED BINARY

Le Guin's texts consistently insist on the damage inflicted through the use of binaries, in particular polarized binaries. Reminiscent of Baccolin's statement about genre, in Le Guin's texts, trouble comes in systems of control that also "rest on the binary between what is normal and what is deviant" (ibid). In *The Telling* the binary is between the literal and the figurative – science and culture – with the figurative as deviant, a clear sign that the planet is in trouble because "ambiguities never absent from [Le Guin's opus] do not primarily flow from a static balancing of two yin-an-yang-type alternatives, two principles or opposites. . .Rather, the Leguinian ambiguities are in principle dynamic" (Suvin, Parables, 271). However, binaries are as hard to avoid in Le Guin's text as they are in life as Sutty finds when she is sucked into a relationship based on loathing and hatred for the Monitor, who himself is tormented by a need to simplify or determine some form of "truth," a need which produces a binary that leads to a kind of insanity. Such insanity is the obvious outcome, as Patrick Parrinder notes in his discussion of the way in which Gulliver, after his travels through one polarized community after another, falls into "a state of alienation' which amounts to madness" (48). It is that same state of madness that consumes the monitor in *The Telling*, as made clear in his conversation with Sutty at "The Last Library":

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metaphor becomes a free agent that acts as justification for rigid categorizations – disallowing the necessary fluidity, temporal instability, and particular interactions of particular participants of living metaphor.

> "This is where you were coming. . .The place where they hide the books.
> This is it."
>
> "Who are 'they,' Monitor?"
>
> "The enemies of the state." (205)

The monitor's division of the modern conformist citizens and the "traitors" who follow the "old ways" as "us" and "them" is implied by his use of the word "they," but his anger is a response to more than a simple disagreement about how the community is organized. His rage is prompted by fear that is produced by the way language and living metaphor destabilize his conception of the truth.

Polarized binary relationships only allow for the existence of a defined and non-dynamic "Truth," the kind of truth the monitor seeks and claims. His fury with the proponents of the "old ways" and his claim that "[t]hey are enemies of the truth, of science" makes clear his polarized position, a position which indicates his truth is *inextricable* from that of science and science is *inextricable* from his "truth" as a whole. But such a position also demands that truth be understood as something that can be obtained and owned, a position well suited to a community that equates "work" and "wealth" (75) in a simplistic equation that refuses to take into account other less measurable factors because factors that are less measurable muddy the economic/political waters. Much the way scientists even today claim an "objectivism" which purports to be based in "value-free, impartial, dispassionate objectivity that is supposed to guide scientific research" (Harding, 741) without reference to the agent of that scientific research – that mythical "neutral" scientist – the "Corporation" of Aka suggests that "PURE SCIENCE DESTROYS

CORRUPTION" (8). It is a statement dependent on a false presumption that "pure science" can exist as pure once the scientist – i.e. the subject – has engaged in perception, experimentation, record keeping, funding, etc. Such subjective positions within "pure science" also demand recognition of a clearly delineated ownership through discovery and position.

The propaganda further suggests that the old ways in their ambiguous state, with their living metaphor and poetry, cannot be pure, and thus, cannot be "true" as the state of "pure" science must have corruption to destroy, and the word "pure" suggests an oppositional position to that which is not pure – ambiguity and variety. So, for the Monitor and the Corporation and its "consumer/producers" with values posited in ownership, any available truth must be encompassed within science, and within that categorization, those truths must be both comprehensible and a potential acquisition, as represented in Aka's single-minded and often brutal quest for technological advancement, that much touted "march to the stars." But Le Guin suggests that the unmeasurable – despite the fact that its unmeasurable state makes ownership and valuation nearly impossible – has a value all its own, that, whether a society chooses to ignore the unmeasurable or not, the unmeasurable is the foundation of day-to-day life, and although ignoring it may be a choice, avoiding the consequences is impossible.

Sutty's despair at the beginning of the novel, which is made clear in her frustration with the "bad food," "stupid unnecessary traffic jams," and "noise all the time" which combine to produce her conclusion that Aka is a "people hyping itself into making every mistake every other population in FF-tech mode had ever made"

(9), is in fact despair at the simplification and elision of a thousand-year-old narrative based in living metaphor. The difference between the shout of the "Corporation" (those shouts of capitalized letters, the slogans that offer simplistic platitudes constructed in effaced and determinative metaphors) and the murmur of "the Telling" is the difference suggested by Ferdinand de Saussure in his reorganization of our relationship with language such that language is no longer "a transparent tool for describing in clear ways a reality that exists around us" (quoted by Haslam, 75). His is a statement that changes our relationship with languages but also refuses and denies the concept that "reality" is static and clearly delineated. Such is not the state of either language or the world; rather, as Jason Haslam writes, "language. . .shapes the very way we see that reality" (75). In fact, the very existence of living metaphor – and even those more destructive and limiting forms of metaphor – reflects that lack of clarity as well as the fact that language takes an active part in the creation of that reality.

Metaphor insists that predication embedded in a form that – unlike simile which compares – insists upon a replacement must be an expansion, a new construction, an altered view that reinvents that which it views. The idea that language shapes and creates rather than describes is a reversal that proscribes the idea of that single "Truth" so prized by the Monitor, but one with which Le Guin takes us even farther in the way "the Telling" posits meaning primarily within storytelling and living metaphor, and the processes by which both are created. It is a process that eventually reaches a culmination in what appears to be mysticism, but is actually a meeting of the figurative and the literal in a materialized metaphor.

METOPHOR AS MAGIC?

Le Guin is extremely hesitant in her relationship to anything that can be classified as the "occult," stating in her essay "A Response to the Le Guin Issue" that she "loathe[s] occultism" and that in her texts ESP is a "metaphor" (Response, 158), and yet, in *The Telling*, Le Guin has chosen to present scenes that appear "supernatural" in very literal terms within a science fiction text rather than the more apparently suitable genre of fantasy in which she also writes. Within the novel, Sutty too loathes the unexplained, the mystical, the arcane, finding any hint of mysticism disturbing in its suggestion that "the Telling" is just another religious hoax perpetrated to manipulate followers, yet, all the while, she longs for access to the sublime.[99] For the most part in *The Telling* there are merely hints at the impossible, and Sutty turns with distaste from the maz who claim "arcane knowledge, and supernal powers" (132), categorizing such claims as "drivel" (132) and "hocus pocus" (131) – an opinion that seems to reflect Le Guin's own. She also steps past moments that call into question her conception of what is reasonable, such as her response to the moment during her introduction to Okzat-Ozkat in which she stands with the barrow man looking up at the mountains, and "others stop to help

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[99] In leaving the Unists of Earth behind, there is a valid argument that Sutty has replaced a simple deity with the complex world of the Ekumen as an alternative god. The possibility is briefly addressed when at the Last Library one of the maz finally recognizes that the people of Aka have also done just that: "'I thought of you . . . of all the people of the Ekumen, as very wise, above error. How childish.' Goiri said. 'How unfair.'" (215). It is a moment of recognition of assumptions that relieve the "lesser" member of the dynamic of responsibility. In Sutty's case, her search is clearly a search for meaning, and her attempts to maintain that search only within the tangible effects of culture evolves and transforms to include the idea that that meaning must include more than the measurable and the material.

them gaze" because "[t]hey all knew what Silong looked like and therefore could help her see it" (53). After a communal discussion about the possibility of traveling to Mount Silong and what benefit is to be found there (including three hundred years of sex and the ability to fly), those "others" "vanish" (54), a term that is left in limbo. Le Guin never makes clear if that "vanishing" is a literal unexplained phenomenon (suggested by the statement that they "waver" before vanishing), an hallucination experienced by Sutty (unsupported by the text), or a metaphorical "vanishing" (quick exit) in response to the hated "Monitor" who has arrived. By refusing to explain and specifically implying more than one possibility, Le Guin suggests that all forms of meaning available are relevant and present a form of accuracy, creating layering that implicates the arcane and the every day.

In Le Guin's refusal to pin down definition and its consequent offering of layered possibility and multiple meaning, she expands this metaphorical reading to include her other references to the still extant knowledge of "the Telling" such as the still visible writing that can be seen through the mandated whitewash on the walls of the lotions shop: Sutty notes that those ideograms just barely readable through the layers of whitewash pulse "evenly, regularly, expanding and shrinking very gently, as if they were breathing" (57) and offer "a queer subliminal legibility" (55) as does Le Guin's own layering of information. In fact, despite her own refusal of the unmeasurable and the unexplained – that is, of course, the unknown – Sutty consistently finds herself in situations in which her actions and interpretations of a moment call into question her own relationship with "reality" suggesting other "realities" beneath the surface or to the side of the material state she is expecting. In

fact, despite her consistent attempts to dismiss the recurring instances when she is confronted by empirical evidence of the impossible, eventually she can no longer simply turn away from those moments in which the literal and the figurative meet while both remain extant such that they work in synch to expand the meaning beyond the sum created by the confluence of the two states – measurable and the unmeasurable.

After dismissing earlier moments as mere confusion, Sutty is less able to ignore the steadily occurring anomalies that exist within the alternative relationship with the material world that is "the Telling" and is, in consequence, faced with the limitations of a single human brain and perception. When a half-witted attendant of a meditation Sutty is attending attempts to help her with an unfamiliar movement during a group exercise/meditation by walking into the air, whispering "Up – like this – see?" such that he is "standing barefoot half a meter above the floor" (137), Sutty's ability to claim her own conception of what is possible as the only acceptable truth fails. That the man's position is not an hallucination is made clear when the leader of the meditation reaches up to help the man down saying, "Come down, Uki" (137), a response that confirms that the man is, in fact, elevated (standing on air) *and* that the position is not surprising to the group leader (the maz). Anyone acquainted with meditation and yoga is used to the incorporation of metaphor in commands such as "be nothing," "lift your heart to your chest," etc., but here Le Guin, suggests a material realization of such commands, and she does so within the – in some ways – rigid confines of science fiction, i.e. fiction which is supposed to comply with "accurate technical and scientific detail" (Hubble, xiii). As a self-avowed sceptic,

there must be a reason for Le Guin's inclusion of what appears to be the materially impossible in a science fiction text – especially considering her own work in the genre of fantasy and the options that offers – and that reason is encompassed in the need to take a close look at the unstated limitations that Sutty (and through Sutty, all of us including Le Guin) is placing on her perceptions of what is reasonable.

As Sutty listens to the various maz she places limits on what she is willing to hear because she is originally unwilling to step into an area she feels is fraught and unhealthy because of her past interactions with religion and specifically the Unists attempts to limit the movement and choices of the people through multiple means including determinative and effaced metaphor. Her response to certain of the maz suggests a desire to pick and choose what she will consider as valid in an attempt to protect her own appreciation for the system – suggesting a belief that her own perceptions are in fact the standard by which she can determine the "reasonable" – and as such, her own ideas of what is acceptable within that system: "She was afraid that this woman who embodied the system fully, who lived it totally, would force her to admit that it was hysterical, obsessional, absolutist, everything she feared and wanted it not to be" (141). Sutty's fear suggests her standard includes a rationality that must reign in a state of "purity" as untainted (and as brutal?) as the Monitor's, suggesting that if we cannot understand an event, that event is unreasonable and cannot exist – that all knowledge can be conscribed within rationality/science. That Sutty is more sophisticated and understands the world as more complex than the Monitor does not change her need for everything to be explainable, everything to fall within the reasonable. However, as maz Elyed says with calm reason, "What we do

is unreasonable" (141). In that one calm admission, the "reasonable" as unimpeachable standard and the single subject/agent as determiner of what is "reasonable" is called into question.

If the Monitor has made a deity out of science, Sutty has done the same with human comprehension. Only when Sutty begins to accept the limitations of human comprehension does her comprehension of "the Telling" become more than a personal search for meaning and a deification of human intellect. After all, if the human brain and cognitive process can comprehend/encompass all, how is that human intellect different from a deity? It is through a recognition and acceptance of the unreasonable – i.e. that which is beyond human scope or comprehension – that Sutty is able to really begin her exploration of "the Telling," and of course, the only way the "unreasonable" can be expressed in language is through metaphor and poetry. Thus, Le Guin's presentation of the materialized metaphor – that moment when the man who is half-witted, i.e. unable to employ rational thought and thus not limited to the "reasonable," steps into the air to express his comprehension of the command to rise – suggests not faith nor mysticism, but rather, the very fact of metaphor.

The temptation is to speak of metaphor as productive in either the most basically material of ways (Lakoff and Johnson's direct equation) or in the most immaterial of ways, a style that often suggests that metaphor merely offers a new view. But in fact, metaphor constructs, if not always in measurable ways, in unquestionably visible ones creating influence that changes language, response, and the world in which those interactions exist. Ricoeur suggests analysis of metaphor

be enacted through "propositional logic," that "metaphor be considered within the framework of predication" (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 118), and in its predication, metaphor as a replacement (substitution theory) can also be considered as a new creation (interaction theory) (Ricoeur, *Rule*, 119). If Uki – with his limited ability to reason – does not understand the command to rise as a metaphor and thus performs the move authentically in the material world, the metaphor becomes a creator of something new well beyond the realm of language; he materializes the metaphor, and that materialization is the source of change. Le Guin creates such materialized metaphor in nearly all her texts, as is in the case in *The Eye of the Heron* when the People of the Peace become newly constructed slaves – a state that is produced through determinative metaphor, or the connecting arc of the bridge between Gethen and the Ekumen that is produced through the living metaphor of Estraven's death as the blood and mortar in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, or in fact, the way Sutty's journey to the "last Library" acts as a materialized metaphor in which her metaphorical move to acceptance of scale and inaccessibility matches step for step her material trek through blind valleys and nearly impassable mountain ranges.

As such, Le Guin's choice to place Uki's scene in a science fiction novel is not about miracles; it is a reference to how little we know about the relationship between world and word, the size and scope of the patterns. It suggests the "size" of the "field" of knowledge is beyond comprehension – at least human comprehension – and that a willingness to accept – to consent to – the scene despite that inability to comprehend is a position that offers both a scope of view and a relationship with that field of knowledge that is unavailable through any other approach. In this very odd

text of Le Guin's, there is no suggestion that materialized metaphor is mysticism or "super"natural; rather, her construction is a recognition of a need for courageous acceptance of the possibility that the "natural" is far larger than we are often willing to consider.

THE FUTURE AS METAPHOR

That we need to broaden our relationship with the unknown and the unmeasurable is an idea most directly related with our relationship with the future. As the text draws to a close with a completely new and unpredicted outcome in which the last library has been discovered but not destroyed because the watching eyes of the Ekumen change the behavior of what has been until now a brutally destructive regime, Le Guin steps away from the obvious drama of total loss and total gain. Under the witnessing eyes of the ultra-civilized and neutral Ekumen, who – although neutral – do not hide their grief at the loss of a culture thousands of years in the making, the Corporation rethinks its position: "Since an Akan ship is on its way to Hain, and being informed that an Ekumenical ship is scheduled to arrive next year, some elements within the Council have advocated a more relaxed policy" (243). It is those eyes of the Other and that Other's knowledge that has potential to keep the Library extant, as noted by one of the maz, Goiri: "But maybe the fact that you know about it, that the Ekumen is interested in it, would protect the Library" (214). As well, Sutty's great enemy, the Monitor, is no bogyman after all. Left crippled after a plane crash on his quest to stop Sutty's discovery of "rotten-corpse superstitions" (263) and, cared for by the pilgrims and scholars, his fanaticism is

transmuted to its original source, the fear and self-loathing of the child caught within the polarity of two generations. It is only when Sutty can see the face of the person beneath the face of the bureaucrat and fanatic that she is able to accept the complexity that defies rational explanation, and only in doing so is she able to risk the Last Library to the unknown future.

In fact, despite the risk to the Last Library, the adherents to the telling never predict the future, and consequently, never fall into the associated trap of the ends and means. In the structures of "the Telling," the present engagement must be balanced and the costs are never exported from the present moment. In even the most mundane daily interactions, there is no borrowing or lending: "It [the Telling] chiefly prescribed respect for your own and everybody else's body, and chiefly proscribed usury" (117), instead "cash was paid for value received" (103). In a society that never defers cost, the conception of damaging immediate action as acceptable because of some conceived future gain becomes impossible. As such, one does not predict and scheme to reach the conceived prediction; rather, one builds the present moment in order to reach the next moment, and because the results of destructive behavior are immediate they are less likely to be indulged. In consequence, while fully aware of the danger the Monitor presents to the Last Library, there is no discussion of killing him. One does not kill to support a supposed future gain because one cannot defer payment for that action, so his presence is a problem, but not a moral problem. As a result, he is nursed and cared for and the problem is resolved through interconnection as he too must respond to the immediate interaction based in kindness. As in the way utopia must be

reinvented in each interaction never becoming temporally stable in *The Dispossessed*, "the Telling" is a process of reinvention of self in each separate engagement, and so, word and world must work together and can never be deferred because if an agent attempts to act without reference to the effect that will be produced by the cause of said agent's action the immediate consequences will bring the elements back into alignment. Thus, in the present action lay the future and the past, all extant simultaneously; it is a reflection of the simultaneous existence of all the elements of a metaphor. The future thus becomes a layered construct, paradoxical and metaphorical in that it is what it cannot be, extending in both directions at once, knowable and yet not knowable in that we can see the building blocks of action but not the changes produced in time.

So, as Sutty faces the unknown response of the Corporation, she does so through the careful and slow steps that include an awareness of the past, a complete interaction with the present, and an outstretched hand to the future. Rather than the dead run to that determinative metaphor that the future is for the Corporation, that "MARCH TO THE STARS" (ibid) that will end in broken communities and a destroyed planet, Sutty stops, considers, takes time to "sit on a bag" (Le Guin, LHD, 76) and finds the next stable stepping stone in a path that is, not only unknown, but fraught and dangerous – but also a partner in the construction of the present moment. The future, as discussed in the introduction, cannot be avoided but the options in approach determine the outcome of that approach. If the future is not the promised triumph the Corporation would like us to believe – and clearly it is not, as the death of the Monitor/Yara makes clear – it must be approached in the same way any

unknown must be approached, through an expansion of the present moment, a misnaming that states the future to be an extension of the present all while knowing that that "misnaming" – that impertinent predication – is not the thing in itself, but instead, an attempt to reach – to create – the thing in accessible form: the impertinent predication that hopes to become newly pertinent. In other words, the future is a metaphor and thus requires informed consent to be "living/livable." Through metaphor and the way in which it combines what is with what is not through consent to that which we cannot control, be that uncontrollable variable the unknown other, the unknown fact, or the unknown future, we can find our next step, ask our next question, and consider our next move.

When presented with the unexplainable, we flail in our terror at the destabilization of a world we would like to predict, and yet, when we predict, we often – if not usually – predict failure and doom. The abyss is not difficult to imagine nor is it difficult to find. The abyss is just at the edge of our eye, one step off whatever path we happen to be on, and right around the corner. What is far more difficult to imagine – a far more difficult story to tell – is the complexity of a respectful interaction with the unpredictable. There is no rest, no day off, for the thinking responder who goes beyond the kneejerk reaction; each moment requires engagement. Thus, we try to discover the "rules" by which the world functions such that we are not frozen and exhausted; we tell stories to practice for the next interaction in an attempt to make rules to live by. Yet the world changes far more quickly than our reaction time, and so those who live strictly by the rules must make more and more rules as each situation evolves.

Le Guin suggests adhering to very few rules; instead, rather than rules she offers broad precepts including accuracy and respect for the other, the self, and the environment in which we live. She acknowledges the paradox that comes with a desire to acquire knowledge – that it is only an acquaintance, that our relationship with knowledge is that of maintenance person not lord. As well, she points out the fact that all repression neglects a recognition of the other as enfranchised self (Hegel, 119) and that attempted control of others is a lessening, a flattening and a move toward death, for in reaching for safety we reach toward the only position from which life is safe from death – i.e. death itself. Le Guin makes clear that what control one has is limited to oneself within the moment in which one exists and makes reference to that occasional glimpse we gain as to the great pattern fleetingly recognized through the tiny portion of that pattern that we can "know" and from that tiny portion within a single moment we use metaphor to expand our ideas into what they cannot be, our guess or hunch or vision. It is that vision that allows us to take that next step into an unknown and unmeasurable future.

Conclusion: Risky Futures

In a world that has refused to make peace with risk, a world whose "failings of security, are nothing short of fanatic attempts to contain movement, deny change, and ignore anything that is different" (Whitehall, 170), effaced and determinative metaphor become the weapons of choice for any number of individuals and institutions in their attempts to control and repress – not just others – but the world itself. As such, it is not without cause that metaphor has become the boogie-man of many of our most important theorists, but without metaphor we exist in a world of action and thought that is limited to the literal, the measurable, and the known without access to language that allows for discussion of the unmeasurable and the unknown. Such a position polarizes important discussions so that they exist between "faith" and "knowledge" as if a world without absolutes is impossible: impossible in its existence, impossible to navigate.[100] But it is exactly that world – one without absolutes – that we must face on a daily basis, and we can only do so through methodologies like metaphor. By relegating our best tool for the procedure to the dustbin of the frivolous, the imprecise, and the decorative, by pretending that metaphor is either unnecessary or too inexact to be considered in careful estimation of any situation, or by claiming metaphor is only a repression rather than a necessary

[100] This concept is not unrelated to what Thomas Baldwin calls "scientism" in his introduction to Merleau-Ponty's work: an assumption that "the standard causal methodology of the physical sciences is that which is appropriate for explanatory inquiries of all kinds" (3).

mode of comprehension, we cripple ourselves in our attempts to interact with that world.

The statement that one is "bursting with rage" may be more satisfying than the statement that one's rage is "beyond control," but it is also more accurate in that it encompasses not only our comprehension of that state but the result as well. With the term "bursting" we understand the inherent lack of control, but we also can assume certain responses and result through our knowledge of material explosion. We understand that the result of that rage may include noise, damage, and destruction. The metaphor gives us warning, declares the best guess as to the future, and offers us scope. In fact, in declaring the only viable mode to be that of the exact and the measurable we misplace ourselves, declaring ourselves god in that the only world to which we will admit is one that our brains can encompass. Alternatively, in refusing to accept the risk of the unknown even while admitting to it – i.e. in depending on faith – we hand over the job of interaction to some other god and employ determinative metaphor to limit the standards by which we will agree to comprehend the results of our refusal.

In such a world, prediction is accepted without the necessary awareness of the limitations it creates or the unearned justification it lends to means put in place to reach that predicted end that we have forgotten is only inevitable if we make it so. In such a world – where imagination is limited to a repetition of what is literal, measurable, and known – the new becomes a state to which we are subjected with no agency of any kind while fully convinced that our agency is complete, ending in

confusion because of unforeseen results. When we believe ourselves masters, we are not even agents in the one arena in which we can claim limited agency – the management of ourselves. However, metaphor can act as one of Merleau-Ponty's "nerve-centres of linguistic change" (qtd by Steiner, 118), and as such, is not limited to its repressive forms: determinative and effaced; rather, metaphor can be used as a means of "orienting oneself in relation to the possible" (Merleau-Ponty, 59). Metaphor makes possible the moment when the new and the unknown are accessible in the tension of the open space: Ricoeur's "'tensional' truth" that "most hidden dialectic – the dialectic that reigns between the experience of belonging as a whole and the power of distanciation that opens up the space of speculative thought" (*Rule*, 371) – that moment of living metaphor.

The existence of effaced and determinative metaphors is made necessary by the choices we make in attempting to secure our safety – in our refusal to make peace with risk – in that the costs paid for such impossible goals are not foreclosed; rather, they are merely exported to the Other. In doing so, we use effaced and determinative metaphors to remove the moment of consent from those Others who might justifiably protest their dehumanization to beast of burden who carry the costs of that fact of life: that life is by definition at risk of death. Grouped into sacrificial communities, it is only by removing the inherent humanity of those groups that the costs can be transferred and the sacrifice can go forward, and in doing so, one must replace *what is* with *what is not*, replace the conception of human with non-human, leapfrogging the moment of consent in that determinative metaphor for fear that it will (justly) be refused. But if effaced and determinative metaphor are the method of

choice of those who would attempt the impossible – to secure safety – living metaphor is one of the most powerful responses to those tools of dehumanization. For in living metaphor, there is no deferring costs, no transference of engagement. Living metaphor exists only in particular and immediate engagement, exists only for those who are willing to engage over and over again with, not just the form but also, the Other who stands in one of necessary positions that make up the form – transmitter, receiver, and referent – always remembering that necessary moment of consent that demands respect for the Other.

In Le Guin's fiction, the dynamics of respect are always important. Whether they are present or missing within the interactions that make up the plots that spiral out into the universe only to return home, gesturing always to our own affairs, Le Guin's work is profoundly engaged with the way in which those dynamics are structured and always acknowledges the necessary space allotted to respect for the Other. As such, her texts are constructions of metaphors, outlining not only an alternate comprehension of the world and the Other but also the very structures of metaphor itself, gently insisting we consider the way language works to construct our selves, our world, and that Other, always aware of the need to gain the consent of all participants if the interaction is to be legitimate. Le Guin's fiction consistently acts as a signpost, indicting the view before us without a demand as to the interpretation of that view. In keeping with the foundational rule of respect – that each of us must have the space to make our own decisions – Le Guin's texts insist, not that we *do* what the author thinks is best, but that we *see* and admit to the world and the Other before making our decision.

Of course, even in the act of indicating one is *situated*, placed such that any act of indication is a political act, but Le Guin has proven her awareness of her situated position in her reaction to the criticisms she has been offered over her career. In her consistent acts of listening and her willingness to educate herself about the position of the Other, in her willingness to read and consider the schools of thought upon which her work touches, Le Guin has paid respect to all those Others she includes in her process of writing, those reader/participants (*Dancing,* 198) who take part in the "collaboration" (*Dancing*, 199) which she acknowledges as an unavoidable structure of writing. It is in that acknowledgement of the Other and the Other's position that we admit that we "know" far less than we would like to claim, and it is in the acknowledgement of our limited knowledge that we position ourselves such that our position reflects the only functional relationship with the universe we inhabit.

Admitting to the unknown and including that moment of respect for the Other is not to say we should not strive to know; rather, I (and I would argue Le Guin) am suggesting that we should not limit our awareness of the world to what can be *known*. Rather, we must take into account all those positions and states and planets and worlds that are not knowable as we engage in knowing, a reach into the sublime that "occurs at the moment when iridescent uncertainty opens into a metaphoric world whose moral and cognitive dimensions become statable (sic) values, though not (or not yet) rationally justifiable beliefs" (Leypoldt, 154). We must recognize blind faith as the dangerous confabulation it is while considering the reason that metaphor exist: i.e. that there is much that does not fit into the literal or

the rational and that to limit ourselves to either is a limitation that will determine much more than any single interaction. In other words, one must recognize one's position in the space between the two poles, rational thought and blind faith, with respect for the Other to act as ballast in our process of decision making. Any attempt to expand beyond the literal includes recognition of what is known and what is not known, and an acknowledgement that much may be unknowable for human bodies with human brains, but that to move beyond the rational is dangerous as well, and such a move requires consent from all involved. Only then, with the acknowledgement that measurement and rational thought are not the only measure by which to determine value combined with a recognition that blind faith is not a tenable methodology, can one make the attempt to expand beyond the measurable and the literal employing living metaphor with its embedded moment of consent as the means by which to make the trip. It is a process which Ursula K. Le Guin enacts with beauty and grace.

Le Guin is an important writer for many reasons: as a woman, as a thinker, as an expert in the craft of writing, but possibly most importantly, as a person who is unswervingly respectful to those people and ideas with whom she interacts including the Other and the unknown. As such, her metaphors are mind expanding and meaningful in ways few metaphors manage. Her metaphors invite us all to see a world in which there is hope for that future that is itself a metaphor that we have yet to compose.

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