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ANTHROPOLOGY AND MYTH IN THE WRITINGS
OF URSULA K. LE GUIN

by

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"Sleepers are workers and collaborators
in what goes on in the universe."

HERACLITUS

Introduction

In order to establish the relationship between Ursula K. Le Guin's writing and thought and that of her father, I have divided my thesis into five chapters: "Alfred L. Kroeber as an Influence on His Daughter," "Orpheus and Apollo in The Left Hand of Darkness," "Orpheus as Shaman in The Lathe of Heaven," "The Beginning Place as a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Girl" and "The Feminine Evolution of Ursula K. Le Guin."

In the first chapter I argue that in Le Guin's family Kroeber's eminence and age and his interest in his children created an environment in which he undoubtedly became a dominant force in his family's intellectual and imaginative life. I also speak generally about how Le Guin borrowed and metamorphosed what she wanted from Kroeber's anthropological theories, ideas and methods. Finally this chapter argues that the connection between Kroeber and Le Guin is strongest in her mythic writings --The Left Hand of Darkness, The Lathe of Heaven, The Tombs of Atuan, The Beginning Place and certain stories from The Compass Rose--the connection being expressed in the mythic characters and narratives the books evoke. Specifically, Kroeber's relationship with primitives such as the American Indians he studied and his investigation of psychoanalysis are metamorphosed into the myth of Orpheus in both The Left Hand of Darkness and

The Lathe of Heaven. Kroeber's friendship with his informants and their periodic presence in his household as well enters Le Guin's writing as a fascination with primitive cultures and an attraction to the figure caught between "backward" and "advanced" cultures.

The second chapter focuses on The Left Hand of Darkness and examines Genly Ai's role as anthropologist and artist, and furthermore argues that he ultimately fails as an artist because of a kind of anthropological alienation. Orpheus and Apollo, the mythic figures evoked by Genly Ai, are examined as figures of betrayal and self-betrayal. The chapter also suggests that Kroeber was a failed artist/Orpheus who "betrayed" his Indian informants, notably Ishi, the last Yahi Indian, whom Kroeber and T. Waterman rescued and protected. Finally, I suggest that Le Guin, in order to become an artist, had to reject some of her father's ideas, notably his distrust of psychosis and the shamanistic experience, particularly in light of the importance of the shamanistic foretelling ritual in The Left Hand of Darkness.

The third chapter explores the importance of the shaman/artist figure to Le Guin as it is most powerfully evoked in The Lathe of Heaven. This chapter also argues that the clearest manifestation of the Orpheus figure occurs in this book and that there is a relationship between the myth of Orpheus and shamanistic ritual. It also explores how Native American myths about the creation of the world support the

identification of Orr, the world dreamer, as a shaman and Haber as a failed shaman or medicine man. Furthermore, this chapter will suggest that the intense relationship of Haber and Orr argues for a dialogue of shadow and self, that both Haber and Orr are indebted to Kroeber for aspects of their characterization, and that the book expresses Le Guin's deep ambivalence about certain of her father's ideas.

The Beginning Place as a turning point in Le Guin's career is the subject of the fourth chapter. It suggests that this turning point is demonstrated by the change in the dominant myth in her writing from Orpheus/Apollo to Psyche/Beauty and the emergence of a female hero, moreover one with latent artistic qualities. In it I suggest that the initiation rites of the female artist differ substantially from the male experience, the woman's creation of herself as artist always involving more of an inward struggle than a violent, externalized, social one.

The chapter also attempts to show that Lord Horn and the Master are both father figures, the true father being finally accepted as the dessicated, deathlike Horn whose relationship to the action in the story is distanced and remote. Horn's remoteness I argue is also indicative of Kroeber's gradual recession as a paradigm from Le Guin's writing, and his death as a force in her imagination.

The last chapter examines Le Guin's evolution, looking specifically at the mythic stories in her latest collection

The Compass Rose, and dramatizing her evolution through a specific comparison of The Tombs of Atuan and The Beginning Place, since both have central female characters. In particular it examines the change of myth from The Tombs of Atuan, where Tenar is an Ariadne and Andromeda figure to The Beginning Place where Irene evokes Psyche and Beauty, suggesting that the woman's role changes from helpmate and victim to hero in her own right. This chapter also argues that Le Guin has demythologized the father and has continued to attack the social scientist/anthropologist in her stories as being of little use to her as an artist and a seeker of truth. Finally it suggests that Le Guin's liberation from her father is a kind of Promethean rebellion against patriarchal culture and cosmology.

Chapter I

Alfred L. Kroeber as an Influence on His Daughter

Ursula K. Le Guin, writing in an era of feminist activism within the freedom of science-fiction settings, has been criticized for not giving women stronger, freer roles in her brave new worlds (The New Woman, 32; Monk, 19; Rhodes, 109; Russ, 79). Her creation of an ambisexual world in The Left Hand of Darkness (1969) is generally admired for the way in which it comments on sexual politics in twentieth-century North American society. At the same time she is criticized for choosing a male protagonist or narrator for her mature "science-fiction" novels: The Left Hand of Darkness, The Lathe of Heaven (1971) and The Dispossessed (1975).

Le Guin, herself, has explained her decision to make Genly Ai male in The Left Hand of Darkness as necessary to foil the feminine side of the Gethenians and to avoid the awkwardness and distraction of using feminine pronouns. The same rationalization cannot be made for the other two novels. It may be argued that Le Guin is writing out of a science-fiction tradition dominated by "androcentricity" where, in a great many works, women do not appear as characters at all, and when they do appear they have secondary or minor roles. Yet if Le Guin is a "most concerned and conscious arguer about

the problem of gynocentric identity" (Monk, 27) as evidenced by her gender experiment in The Left Hand of Darkness, it seems particularly disappointing that Shevek in The Dispossessed is male: "There is no reason why Shevek, the mathematician who discovers a theory which will make possible instantaneous interstellar communication, should not be female--if one of Le Guin's apparent concerns in the novel is the presentation of a perfectly non-sexist society . . ." (Monk, 19).

I propose that Le Guin's father, A.L. Kroeber, the eminent anthropologist, had a more profound influence on her writing than any literary antecedents in the science-fiction tradition. Her choice of male protagonists, anthropological narrative technique, anthropological models for cultural contents and myth--in particular her use of shamanism, her interest in primitive culture, the psychic "underworld" and her share in her father's cultural guilt--are all evidence of her father's influence. Furthermore I will argue that in her mythic writing (The Left Hand of Darkness, The Tombs of Atuan (1971), The Lathe of Heaven, The Beginning Place (1980) and The Compass Rose (1982)¹ there is always an Orphic descent into the underworld. In Le Guin's earlier novels the mythic figure manifested in this psychic descent is indeed Orpheus, the mythic character suggested to Le Guin by Kroeber and the mythic hero who had to come to terms with his grief and loss.

When Le Guin was born her father was fifty-three and his reputation as a scholar was already well established. Kroeber studied under the pioneer of American anthropology,

Franz Boas, and is himself described as "one of the greatest anthropologists of the twentieth century" (Steward, 23). While at the University of California at Berkeley he was a colleague of Robert Oppenheimer, and when he taught at Columbia, Kroeber met and talked with Père Teilhard de Chardin and Julian Huxley. He came in contact with psychoanalytic theory when he visited Vienna in 1915, was himself analysed by Freud's disciples, Dr. Jelliffe and Dr. Stragnell, and later corresponded with both Freud and Jung. Yet despite his active professional life he took a great interest in his children and, according to Theodora Kroeber, his second wife, had a talent for being a father.

According to Theodora in Alfred Kroeber: A Personal Configuration (1970), in his own academic studies Kroeber had been drawn originally to literature: "Kroeber read poetry all his life: few ordinary days passed without his taking one or another volume from the shelves of poetry and reading for a few minutes, perhaps for an hour" (261). It is not surprising given this environment that Le Guin wrote poetry as a young girl and particularly the poem "Warp and Weft," as a memorial of her father after his death:

This old notebook I write in was my father's;
 he never wrote in it. A grey man,
 all my lifetime, with a short grey beard,
 a slight man, not tall.
 The other day I saw five elephants,
 big elephants, with palm-trunk legs
 and continents of sides, and one,
 the biggest one, had bent tusks bound

about with brass. They were waiting,
 patient, to be let outside
 into the sunlight and the autumn air,
 moving about their stall so quietly,
 using the grace of great size and the gentleness,
 swaying a little, silent, strong as ships.
 That was a great pleasure, to see that.
 And he would have liked to see the big one
 making water,
 too, like a steaming river,
 enough to float ten bigots in.
 O there is nothing like sheer Quantity,
 mountains, elephants, minds.

(Wild Angels, 1975, 13)

The opening lines, "This old notebook I write in was my father's;/he never wrote in it," suggest that Le Guin is writing out of the same tradition as her father, and that the notebook he did not write in was that of poesis and fiction-making. There is a sense of continuity and homage in the poem. Her choice of elephants for their grace, sheer size and gentleness, suggests her reverence for him and concurrently his large place in her own personal mythology.

Le Guin herself has acknowledged masculine influences in her statement: "I'm an anthropologist's daughter and an historian's wife" ("Vertex," 96). The context of this remark is her statement that the writing of future histories is much akin to the writing of the history of a time far in the past. In both there is as much myth-making as speculation. Kroeber's investigation into the deep past has more in common with his daughter's science fictional "extrapolations" into the deep future of outer space than with Charles Le Guin's research into the French Revolution. While Le Guin's mother's

discipline was anthropology as well, her achievement is not so much in the field of anthropological theory as in her sensitive recording of Indian myths and in her memoir of the California Indian, Ishi, and his people in Ishi in Two Worlds (1961) and Ishi: Last of His Tribe (1973). Even then Theodora Kroeber never met Ishi and her account is derivative of her husband's experience.

Among Le Guin's family, her brother Karl in his career reveals the father's influence as well. He began his academic career with an interest in Romantic literature but now teaches American Indian literature in the English Department at Columbia University and edits Studies in American Indian Literatures. Karl's devotion to his father is reflected in the vehemence of his defense of his father when he was criticized by David Brumble for his anthropological ethics.²

Julian Steward points out that the Kroeber household was typically German and patriarchal and that Theodora was the ideal wife or helpmate to a great man, making sure his household ran smoothly and taking primary responsibility for the care of the children (19). Kroeber was twenty-one years older than Theodora and thus it is not surprising that his ideas and his projects should predominate in their household. When Theodora writes about their family discussions it is as if she were one of the children, too: "'[We] lured him into talking with us about art and artists, about theories of creativity and beauty, about everything which might have gone

into the book. These conversations were restful and fun for him and exciting for us . . ." (268).

Given Kroeber's stature and his interest in his children, it would be surprising to see no connection between the father's and daughter's work. Indeed, there are striking connections between Le Guin's writing and the writing and thought of Alfred Kroeber. James Bittner reports that Le Guin has acknowledged her transformation of her father's "oikoumenê" ("a great web of culture growth, areally extensive and rich in content" A.L. Kroeber, The Nature of Culture, 1952, 392) into the fictional Ekumen of The Left Hand of Darkness as "an in-memoriam in-joke" (342). Implicit in her notion of the Ekumen as well is her father's idea of cultural evolution. Kroeber believed that culture was accumulative and that the sharing and understanding of other cultures' values and achievements could make mankind more human and that in his heightened humanity man would be able to "comprehend the universe, the beginning and the endlessness" (T. Kroeber, 232). Beginning with "The Superorganic" (1917), Kroeber had stated a belief that true advances in man's society were achieved culturally, above and beyond individual achievements and biological evolution. For Kroeber culture did not arise from the genius of its individuals; culture was more than the sum of its parts. Indeed, Kroeber's notion of culture was almost religious: "in culture he found the commitment and faith which another person finds in religion" (T. Kroeber, 234).

Le Guin herself writes of the Ekumen, a kind of pinnacle of culture, as "an attempt to reunify the mystical with the political" and as "an experiment in the superorganic" in its shunning of aggressive tactics (the survival of the fittest) (132). Le Guin also alludes to her father's ideas of cultural evolution when she writes that the Ekumen proceeds "by subtle ways, and slow ones, and queer, risky ones; rather as evolution does, which is in certain senses its model . . ." (245, emphasis mine). It is not surprising that Le Guin should make this imaginative transformation, for the metaphoric suggestion of the "oikumenê" extending into outer space already existed in her father's Introduction to Anthropology (1948): "They [anthropologists] became aware of culture as a 'universe,' or vast field, in which we of today and our own civilization occupy only one place of many. The result was a widening of a fundamental point of view, a departure from unconscious ethnocentricity toward relativity. This shift from naive self-centeredness in one's own time and spot to a broader view based on objective comparison is somewhat like the change from the original geocentric assumption of astronomy to the Copernican interpretation of the solar system and the subsequent still greater widening to a universe of galaxies" (11, emphasis mine).

Anthropology in its understanding of society as culture provided Le Guin with a model of constructing new worlds and she is convincing in her creations, as convincing as an

anthropologist who attempts to recreate from its artefacts any culture long dead. Indeed, probably the reason that the symbol of the arch and keystone is so effective in The Left Hand of Darkness is that it was a Roman innovation which spread to many cultures and thus has a real meaning for Western civilization and Le Guin's twentieth-century readers, specifically. (It is interesting to note as well that the Romans, while imperialists, did not impose their culture on the peoples they conquered.) Kroeber used the history of the "true arch" as an example of a cultural spread in his Anthropology. His discussion of the mechanism of the arch could be used as an accurate description of how the Ekumen makes peaceful connections with new worlds: "The fundamental principle of the true arch is the integration of its elements. The constituents fuse their strength. Each block has a shape that is predetermined by the design of the whole, and each is useless, in fact not even self-supporting, until all the others have been fitted with it. Hence the figure of speech as well as the reality of the keystone: the last block slipped into place, locking herself and all others . . . this is one of the chief values of the arch: it eliminates a large percentage of brute labor" [force] (482-83). Ekumenization is not accomplished by coercion or aggression but by mutual consent and motivation. In The Left Hand of Darkness the principal agents, Estraven and Genly Ai, must submit to a design which is greater than themselves; their love is sacrificed to it. And if anyone is the

keystone it is Faxe, symbol of the body mystic as well as of the body politic.

Besides providing her with cultural materials and contents--symbols, rituals, myths, folktales--which Le Guin could metamorphose in her science fiction, anthropology through her father gave her a useful narrative technique: an anthropologist/envoy encounters and explores an isolated, exotic culture. In The Left Hand of Darkness an Ekumenical envoy encounters an ambisexual race on a remote glacial planet; in The Dispossessed, Shevek, a scientist from the anarchic world of Annares, visits the capitalistic mother planet Urras from which Annares has been virtually cut off for two hundred years; and in "The Pathways of Desire" from The Compass Rose three anthropologists study a primitive culture on a distant planet. Le Guin's father again provided her with a first-hand paradigm for such encounters. Kroeber in his fieldwork dealt largely with North American Indians, cultures which for many centuries had been isolated from other civilizations, although perhaps none of the encounters was as pure as that with Ishi, the last survivor of the Yahi tribe of California.

Because of her father's anthropology and thus partially through her own personal contact with her father's Indian friends such as Robert Spott or Juan Dolores at their summer cottage, Kishamish, Le Guin expresses a deep respect for the wisdom of North American Indians, the so-called "primitives." It is no doubt because of this deep respect

that she has never attempted to write in the voice of a North American Indian or directly about Indians and their myths. Everything about them that has inspired her has been metamorphosed into science fiction; aspects of them appear in the Gethenians in The Left Hand of Darkness, in the Astheans in The Word for World is Forest (1976), in George Orr in The Lathe of Heaven.

In Le Guin's writing, moreover, the character who is caught between two cultures is a recurrent motif and is no doubt informed by the plight of Indians like Ishi.

In chapter seven of The Dispossessed in which Shevek visits a private home on Urras and where he is charmed by the warm family life and simple elegance he finds there as opposed to the capitalistic waste of the rest of the planet, there is a brief passage which reveals how he is perceived by the children of the house. The intensity and simple beauty of the passage make it stand out disproportionately from the prose around it and suggest its autobiographical origin in Le Guin's own encounters with Indians in her father's home, people like Robert Spott or Juan Dolores who spent the summers of her childhood with the family at Kishamish. First of all there is the father's disapproval: "By the second visit his two sons had decided that Shevek was an old friend, and their confidence in Shevek's response obviously puzzled their father. It made him uneasy; he could not really approve of it; but he could not say it was unjustified" (172). Then there is the

particular reaction of Ini, the youngest (Le Guin was also the youngest): "Shevek behaved to them like an old friend, like an elder brother. They admired him, and the younger, Ini, came to love him passionately. Shevek was kind, serious, honest, and told very good stories about the Moon; but there was more to it than that. He represented something to the child that Ini could not describe. Even much later in his life, which was profoundly and obscurely influenced by that childhood fascination [emphasis mine], Ini found no words for it, only words that held an echo of it; the word voyager, the word exile" (172). This passage seems to acknowledge Le Guin's love and fascination for the voyager and exile as originating in her father's dark, alien friends.³

In addition Le Guin was probably aware as much as her mother of the uncomfortable situation regarding white women that Indians found themselves in, whether through isolation from their own race as in Ishi's case or because of alienation from their roots as with Juan Dolores: "no Indian ever really understood a white woman, and that even if there was much love between them, the relation was doomed, the woman belonging to the advantaged civilization, the man to the disadvantaged" (Ishi, 221). This is precisely the situation in which Genly Ai finds himself, disadvantaged because he is alone yet feeling or needing to feel naturally superior because of his masculine gender.

Le Guin as well seems to share in her father's guilt

at what has happened to the North American Indian peoples. His sorrow and guilt are perhaps more eloquently evident in his refusal to write anything about Ishi after his death. Le Guin's feelings are most harshly expressed in her sense of the usurping European culture's devaluation and thus ignorance of Native American cultures: "The words 'holocaust' and 'genocide' are fashionable now; but not often are they applied to American history. We were not told in school in Berkeley that the history of California had the final solution for the first chapter. We were told that the Indians 'gave way' before the 'march of progress'" ("A Non-Euclidean View," 1983, 165). Later in the same essay when Le Guin writes that "inconvenient Prometheus [was sent] to the reservation," one senses the anger and shame in her choice of words.

Theodora Kroeber in her biography Alfred Kroeber: A Personal Configuration (1970), suggests that Kroeber's exploration of psychoanalysis grew out of a period of pilgrimage occasioned by physical illness and deep personal loss, the death of his first wife Henriette Rothchild and then of Ishi (80-86). She also suggests that this investigation was prompted by a dissatisfaction with his work: "He was now looking, not for a new ethnographic field to dissect and reassemble as he had done with this one [Handbook of the Indians of California (1925)]⁴⁷, but for a new perspective on his own work and on anthropology" (104). This statement, coupled with her remarks about the "exclusive and all-embracing" (85)

quality of the close relationships of his early life (1900-1913), both personal and professional, lead one to speculate that Kroeber needed to distance himself from his work and that he could not give the same kind of energy and love to another culture area. At the same time he had to come to terms with the grief and agony of his loss and psychoanalysis offered this possibility. In Le Guin's writing an imaginative transference of this psychoanalytic exploration, in which psychoanalysis becomes the winter journey or psychic journey, takes place.

Le Guin herself has stated that she came of age at about 31 years old (Dreams Must Explain Themselves, 1975, 14), which was also her age at her father's death. She has also written that childhood ends when children realize their own mortality perhaps through the death of someone close to them. Moreover she has said that the intensity that adolescents feel about life and death is such that "you never take it [death and loss] quite that hard again . . ." (Mershon). With reference to this adolescent intensity, Bittner points out that Le Guin went through a period of "prodigious writing" when she was thirteen after her father almost died and that she went through a similar writing period after her father's death. These writing periods are her own psychic journeys. Bittner also suggests that Le Guin's concentrated creative outpouring was a response to "the mythological event" of her adolescence which was the near loss of her father, but which bore its

full fruit only when she reached her mid-thirties when "she invented--discovered Earthsea and Gethen and the Ekumen at the same time and structured both A Wizard of Earthsea and The Left Hand of Darkness as circular journeys around the image of the Shadow: death" (348).

The literary psychic journey in which Le Guin imitates her father's psychoanalytic "hegira" occurs particularly in The Left Hand of Darkness and The Lathe of Heaven. The mythic situation these books evoke is that of Orpheus descending into Hades following the loss of his wife. Strauss suggests that the myth is particularly attractive to the modern poetic sensibility because it lends itself to an "internalization" (270) such as we find in Le Guin's work. He also suggests that there are three major moments in Orpheus' story: (1) Orpheus as a singer/prophet/shaman who is capable of establishing harmony in the cosmos, (2) the descent into Hades concluding with the loss of Eurydice, the myth's best known part, and finally, (3) Orpheus' death and dismemberment (6). Guthrie argues that Orpheus' death is the most important part of the story (53) and Strauss adds that for the modern poets "it is particularly important that the conclusion of the myth reaffirms more strongly than before, in the 'other' Orphic journey beyond death (that is, as a force transcending death), the Orphic power of song" (6). In the following chapters, I will explore how well the Orpheus evoked in Le Guin's fiction succeeds in praiseful song despite mutability and death and

to what extent Alfred Kroeber served as a model for her Orpheus figures.

Endnotes

¹ I forgo any major discussion of The Dispossessed because it is not a mythic novel.

² K. Kroeber writes in "Reasoning Together": "The problem is that most Indians with whom they [Kroeber & Boas] (and many others) worked (their primary collecting in the field was done before 1920) were not only willing but often eager to recount and to have published matters which Indians today are reluctant to speak of and feel ought not to be published" (256). Were the Indian informants aware of the full implications of what making public or publishing meant, especially those whom Kroeber dealt with through intermediaries? Brumble also makes the point that while Kroeber respected the privacy of individual Indians with whom he dealt, he may not have complied with their society's taboos (266). Karl also responds rather emotionally to Brumble's use of the term "informant" as if he himself equates it with "informer" or "traitor": "And even today the idea of referring to Juan Dolores or Robert Spott as an 'informant' turns my stomach" (259). Brumble points out that both Karl's parents used this term in their published writings simply to connote those who provided "information" (269). For Brumble's original remarks

see "Anthropologists, Novelists and Indian Sacred Material."

³ Theodora Kroeber writes of the special world at Kishamish: "To children and adults alike, Kishamish's forty acres were illimitably expandable, becoming for us a complete world. Much as the California Indians in their long occupation of the land before the coming of the white man, lived within adjacent but separate worlds, tiny, complete, self-sufficient, of known and near boundaries. What lay beyond his own world interested the Californian very little; what lay within it was for him of cosmic variety, complexity, and passionate concern. So it was at Kishamish: a world without phones or doorbells or the tyranny of close schedules; a world for exploration, for reading, for one's own work, for swimming and playing games, for sitting by the outdoor fire until late in the night, talking, telling stories, singing; for sleeping under the stars" (Alfred Kroeber, 141). She also writes of the special place their Indian friends had there: "As they learned the old trails or made new ones with the help of Juan Dolores, a Papago Indian who spent his summers with us, the children ranged farther and farther afield" (141) or "Robert Spott . . . spent his summer vacations with us at Kishamish or came to us in Berkeley, until his death in 1953. We were all fond of Robert, gentlest, most devotedly Yurok-religious and subtly intelligent of men" (158-59).

⁴ Although the Handbook was not published until 1925, the manuscript was completed in 1917.

Chapter II

Orpheus and Apollo in The Left Hand of Darkness

It is said that Orpheus as a mythic hero exists in the tension between Apollo and Dionysus (Guthrie, 41-48). If this is so the Orpheus who manifests himself in The Left Hand of Darkness is closer to Apollo than to Dionysus. Indeed, the other myth evoked by the novel is that of Apollo and Hyacinth.

The Left Hand of Darkness is at least in part an account by Genly Ai to the Ekumenical Council of his first seven years as Mobile on the planet Gethen. It is ostensibly a report of the success of his mission to persuade the races of the planet Gethen to join the Ekumen. The fact that the report is broken into "chapters" and that Genly Ai has come to consider truth to be "a matter of the imagination" (7), however, would seem to indicate Ai's literary and artistic ambitions. Furthermore, it suggests Ai's belief that his political mission and his literary task both required action that was essentially creative. Rather than being totally analytical, rational and manipulative, Ai has had to be intuitive, metaphoric and receptive. I will argue, however, that Genly Ai fails as an artist precisely because he, as Orpheus, surrenders to his Apollonian tendencies.

Furthermore, I will argue that Genly Ai's passive,

recording role as Mobile closely resembles that of an anthropologist like Alfred Kroeber. As I have already argued, Kroeber provided Le Guin with a narrative model, and a new kind of hero--the anthropologist. Susan Sontag has written that the anthropologist is the hero who consciously chooses exile and displacement, making a vocation of and legitimizing the modern condition of homelessness, detachment and intellectual alienation (74). While Genly Ai is not an anthropologist per se his mission, like that of the anthropologist, legitimizes his alienation. Thus, Le Guin is also presenting in The Left Hand of Darkness the picture of the anthropologist as a failed novelist or artist.

This failure, it should be made clear, is Genly Ai's, not Le Guin's. Le Guin's success with the novel is in a sense left-handed. Genly Ai, although he incorporates myth into his story, does not attain the extraordinary vision of a mythic artist. Ai's account of the foretelling, which is a kind of examination of creative forces at work, is unsatisfying, superficial and undigested. Ai's dullness at the foretelling points up his own inability to weave and integrate unconscious contents. Unlike Faxx, a weaver, and Estraven, a former Handdara adept, who are able "to see things whole," Ai's understanding is to the end fragmented and partial. Le Guin uses Ai's failure to suggest a larger vision.¹

It could be argued that the only chapters and arrangements that Genly Ai is responsible for are his own narrative

and Estraven's journal entries.² Ai does make the enigmatic introductory statement that "The story is not all mine, nor told by me alone" (7). I believe that Genly Ai, composing his story four years after it occurred, was anxious about its emotional, subjective and even exotic tone and, like an anthropologist, needed to document and acknowledge his sources --legitimize his alienation. Thus I will argue that "the documents" were chosen by Genly Ai to complete his report even though their contents may be loaded with Le Guin's irony.

Two of the Gethenian tales, "Estraven the Traitor" and "The Nineteenth Day," were actually recorded by Genly Ai during his stay in North Karhide before he entered Orgoreyn. Furthermore, Ai could not have left out the version of "Estraven the Traitor" from his story. The significance of the tale must have hit him as strongly as it does the reader, since it speaks of the awful burden and curse Estraven carries in his name. Indeed, Tibe's strange remark in the first chapter that "Estraven is famous for his kindness to foreigners" (14), refers to Tibe's suspicion of Estraven's treasonous motives, and alludes to the betrayal implicit in his famous name. Ai's inclusion of such tales in his narrative is an extension of his belief that "Truth is a matter of the imagination." In other words, Ai cannot make his report complete without including some of what informs the Gethenian imagination about betrayal and foretelling.

The first tale included, "The Place Inside the

Blizzard," although it was not recorded by Ai, has obviously been transcribed by him because he has signed the footnotes. Later when Ai writes his account of their trip to the ice he records Estraven's argument for travelling over the ice fields: "The good weather, you know, tends to stay over the great glaciers Therefore the legends about the Place Inside the Blizzard" (192). Having included this reference how could he not, in some way, elaborate on it? In this instance Ai, as an anthropologist, might choose not to resort to footnotes but to include an official, archival version of the tale.

Similarly, "On Time and Darkness," a passage extracted from the Yomesh canon, is an official version of what Ai learns orally about Meshe from Asra at the Pulefen death camp, what he learns indirectly from the Foretellers and, with varying degrees of credulity, what he learns from the Commensals. By the time Ai writes his report, he has distanced himself enough from the story to desire a canonical version of Yomesh to balance his implicit, conflicting and unofficial account of it. The footnotes are Ekumenical but anonymous.

The "Orgota Creation Myth" is perhaps most difficult to link to Genly Ai. It is neither recorded nor annotated by him, nor does a direct reference appear to it in either Estraven's journal or Ai's narrative. Anthropologically speaking, a creation myth would be essential to any understanding of the imaginative truths that influence or emerge from Gethenian culture.³ Just as the Judeo-Christian myth of

creation has influenced that culture's sense of man's supremacy over all living creatures, man's dominance over woman, and man's fallen state, so the Orgota myth would account for the necessary place of sacrifice and the truly ambisexual roots of Gethenian culture.

"The Question of Sex," a document already in the Archives of Hain, is a special inclusion. It records an earlier investigator's field notes concerning Gethenian ambisexuality and reveals social considerations of Gethenian sexuality that do not come out in Ai's narrative--namely the lack of repression of sex, the absence of rape and of organized aggression or war. The freakishness of Gethenian sexuality in the known worlds of Hain does warrant repetition for the Stabile of Ollul to whom Ai is reporting, his memory being, like ours, dependent on print. One is also reminded of Sontag's assessment of the anthropologist as invented by Claude Levi-Strauss: he is able to disarm the horror of the primitive by his translation of "the other" into pure formal code (77). The Gethenians, coded into gestation periods, rites, practices are indeed less threatening. Furthermore, this document is the only one that records the official perspective Ai brings with him on his search for truth on Gethen. Finally then, it is this filling in of subtextual information not brought out in Ai's narrative nor implicit in Estraven's journal that persuades one that Ai included these pieces in his report and that they are not the author's supplementary comment from her omniscient perspective.

Having made this claim, I will argue further that Genly Ai is responsible as well for the placement of these "documents" and the naming of the chapter headings. These decisions reveal his literary and artistic ambitions, but at the same time they set up an irony which ultimately reveals his artistic failure. Ai used literary devices such as foreshadowing or "foretelling" in his placement of "The Place Inside the Blizzard," "The Nineteenth Day," and "Estraven the Traitor." By his positioning of "The Question of Sex" and "On Time and Darkness" he highlights subtextual themes and metaphors in the surrounding narrative. Finally, by placing "An Orgota Creation Myth" between Estraven's and Ai's account of the trip over the ice near the end of the book, Ai challenges notions of beginning and ending, birth and death. These devices are of greater aesthetic than social-scientific significance; they do not necessarily add to one's understanding of Gethen but they add to the report's integrity and unity. One can see that these two structuring perspectives--artistic unity and anthropological factuality--are opposing forces at work in Ai's report.

"The Place Inside the Blizzard" seems at first oddly placed, and one would tend to think that it would have been more appropriately put near the chapters on the Gobrin ice field. And yet it conflates so many motifs of the Gethenian tales that its themes constitute a good introduction to what is to come: brothers, incest, betrayal, suicide, and curse.

It also begins the symbolism of the left hand. Moreover, that Hode is unable to say Getheren's name adds special poignance to the fact that when Estraven mindspeaks with Ai, Estraven hears his dead kemmering's/brother's voice. The other two tales almost directly foretell the outcome of Ai's story.

"The Nineteenth Day" comes just before Genly Ai's trip to the Foretellers and right after the mad king Argaven has dismissed the wisdom of the ansible as being as dubious as that of the Foretellers. The complete answer to Berosty's question entails the death of his friend and lover and his own tragic demise. So the answer to Ai's question involves the death of his beloved friend and Ai's own tragic isolation. The tale of Estraven not only suggests some details of Estraven's life but foretells the outcome of Ai's mission. Gethen will agree to join the Ekumen but not without some sacrifice from both sides, and some betrayal.

The foreshadowing devices serve to link thematically with Ai's record of the Foretellers' ritual in "The Domestication of Hunch." Genly Ai does receive a definite "yes" to his question concerning the success of his mission, but the vision that comes with it is quite dramatic, even traumatic. It is a vision which requires interpretation, and like the other foretelling questions it refers back to the questioner: When is the nineteenth day? Who is this woman? Ai did not, however, understand the full implications of this vision and, it will be argued later, he never does.

Since "The Question of Sex" is an excerpt from an early investigator's report one might have thought that it would appear at the very beginning of the book, in a preface by Genly Ai, or in an appendix. Ai's setting it between the two chapters which record first Estraven's and then his own entry into Orgoreyn, however, gives it an importance and significance and points to a subtle distinction between Karhide and Orgoreyn which lies in their different attitudes toward sexuality.

By placing "The Question of Sex" at such a key point in the story, Genly Ai is indicating how significant it was to his actions, discussions and misapprehensions on Gethen. The earlier report was written by a woman and Genly Ai, true to his suspicions about the feminine, implies Oppong's flawed anthropology by including it in his report. For what Ai discovers about the collective society of Orgoreyn that distinguishes it from Karhide is its far greater ability to mobilize and thus to escalate the Sinoth border dispute into an organized conflict, something that Ms. Oppong has theorized will not happen because of Gethenian ambisexuality (interestingly she does not visit Orgoreyn herself). She does wonder, though, "whether human beings lacking continuous sexual potentiality would remain intelligent and capable of culture" (95). One of the most disturbing aspects of Orgoreyn is how sexuality is abused there and how this abuse has become one of the factors which has enabled Orgoreyn to mobilize for war.

The Orgota appear more sophisticated because they

have developed the means to control their sexuality. So not only is their sexuality, like that of all Gethenians, confined to a distinct segment of a monthly cycle, but the Orgota have developed drugs not only to prevent conception but also to choose a preferred gender, artificially to induce kemmer, to suppress deviant sexuality and, by preventing an individual from ever entering kemmer, to suppress sexuality altogether. This last capability is the most insidious because it is used as a means of social control. In fact these various means of controlling sexuality seem to have taken their toll on the culture and intellectual vitality of the Orgota, the possible consequences foreseen by Oppong. Ai detects a lack of elegance in the architecture and costume of Orgoreyn. He finds the food dull, if plentiful, and learns of plans to censor or suppress obscene plays in the kemmer houses. So much for the validity of Oppong's statement for Orgoreyn, that: "Everything gives way before the recurring torment and festivity of passion" (93). Furthermore, Ai finds the people of Orgoreyn bland and submissive to the extent that they do not complain when clearly they have been used as live guinea pigs in a practice skirmish at Sassinoth when Ai crosses the border into Orgoreyn. Or, as Estraven remarks at the end of "Soliloquies in Mishnory": "These Orgota have not the wits nor size of spirit to fear what is truly and immensely strange. They cannot even see it. They look at the man from another world and see what? A spy from Karhide, a pervert, an agent, a sorry

little political unit like themselves" (154).

It is curious, too, that in Orgoreyn Genly Ai is treated in a sexist manner, whereas in Karhide only the insane king refers to him as a pervert. In Orgoreyn he is openly discussed as a pervert or deviant and, at the same time, he is coddled as if he were pregnant or in the female phase. One can see in this treatment a kind of incipient sexual politics creeping into Orgoreyn. Put another way, the Orgota have betrayed their sexual identity and their culture.

By placing "The Question of Sex" in this context, Genly Ai points out that his entry into Orgoreyn had to be in the nature of a penetration of its bland surface, that it had of necessity to be sexual. Indeed, this is foreshadowed by the quality of both Estraven's and Ai's border crossings: both are nocturnal and violent.

Similarly "On Time and Darkness" is placed between Genly Ai's dawning consciousness of the sinister side of Orgoreyn and his recognition of the dark substructure which sustains it. The irony of this document reinforces the recurrent theme that at the left hand of darkness is light. Hence the symbiotic relationship of darkness and light. Orgoreyn, like the high priest Tuhulme, is too energetically trying to deny its own origins. When Ai later concedes that the Yomeshta may have a point it is not in their denial of darkness but in their notion of an ability to see whole, to integrate the light and the dark: "(if only for a flash)

everything at once . . ." (194). He thus returns to one of his original points: "The soundest fact may fail or prevail in the style of its telling . . ." (7). Genly Ai does not deny the truth of the tradition of Yomeshe, but he would argue that Tulhulme's sayings reflect a failure of vision, a failure of imagination, which is further reflected in their flat, doctrinal tone.

Just as "On Time and Darkness" calls attention to the theme of the symbiosis of light and dark, "An Orgota Creation Myth" helps develop the polarity of beginning and end that is suggested in both Ai's and Estraven's accounts of the ice journey. This polarity is evident in the document's very placement: it is the last one included. When Ai and Estraven approach the ice field, Ai sees "DEATH" whereas Estraven sees "a world in the process of making itself" (216). Partially this is due to the fact that Ai's work is done. His narrative sees these events as finished and past, while Estraven's journal is contemporaneous. There is also the sense that the two travellers meet on equal terms and that the two are able to create a new understanding, a new society, and thus a new beginning. Opposed to this is the sense that the two, by being so close to death, have entered an afterworld--the glacier being a kind of frozen Styx. For both, their exiles are a kind of death. The allusion to "the place inside the blizzard" also suggests the afterlife that Getheren and Hode enter in the tale "The Place Inside the Blizzard." Moreover Estraven's

sense of punishment is reinforced by the hellish environment: "If I wrote a new Yomesh Canon I should send thieves here after death. Thieves who steal sacks of food by night in Turuf" (218).

The artistic unity created by the placement of these documents is paralleled by the deceptively simple names Genly Ai has given his chapters. Their bland and innocuous appearance is ironic. "Down on the Farm" suggests a bucolic, even pastoral, scene--a far cry from the Pulefen farm. "One Way into Orgoreyn" and "Another Way into Orgoreyn" attempt to disguise the fact that both the exile's and envoy's entrances are remarkably similar. "Conversation in Mishnory" and "Soliloquies in Mishnory" point to Estraven's greater political astuteness in assessing the Commensals. These are ironies based on what Genly Ai has learned by the end of his story. But there are further ironies which he does not recognize. In the titles--"Domestication of Hunch," "Homecoming" and "Fool's Errand"--though they are taken from actual phrases in Ai's text, one finds a level of irony which is Le Guin's. Is foretelling, in fact, a kind of domesticating of hunches? Whose home is implied? Where is home? Who is the fool and why? Ai would provide one set of answers to these questions and Le Guin another.

Le Guin's ironic distance from Genly Ai is apparent in the "documents" already discussed above. For instance, with "The Question of Sex" there is the suggestion that the Orgota

have betrayed their sexuality. The Orgota in a sense become the bad guys. What Ai fails to see is his similarity to them and his own treachery. It is curious that Genly Ai, though he has been isolated from his own race for two years, expresses or hints at none of his own sexual desires or needs. This is especially conspicuous because Ai is a black Terran and carries with him our culture's popular stereotype of the virile sexuality of black men. Ai on one occasion, indeed, refers to himself as a "stallion." Gethenians are most of the time neutral sexually, yet Ai, who has the potential to be sexually aroused all the time, never is, or does not allow himself to be--especially with Estraven whom he loves. Like a good anthropologist Ai cannot allow himself to "go native."

While Ai presents Tuhulme's sayings, his ironic attitude to them is evident in his understanding of Yomeshta "seeing whole" and his appreciation of Estraven's finely tuned balance: "Light, dark. Fear, courage. Cold, warmth. Female, male. It is yourself, Therem. Both are one. A shadow on snow" (252). Genly Ai would argue that the truth of Meshe does not prevail with the style of Tuhulme's telling, namely Tuhulme's insistence that Meshe is light and not dark. The sayings of Tuhulme are dry catechisms; they talk about mythic events but do not evoke them. In the same way Ai's failure of imagination is in part given away by the style in which he tells his story. Ai's failure to integrate the mythic materials into his narrative speaks of his failure to understand

them and to understand their meaning in his own life. This separation suggests his need to maintain a scientific distance, his need to validate his report with "documentation." The separation of the mythic materials implies a failure of integration of Ai's unconscious contents: "a purely intellectual insight is not enough, because one knows only the words and not the substance of the thing from inside" (Jung, "Aion," 32). Le Guin herself has written: "Our curse is alienation, the separation of yang from yin. Instead of a search for balance and integration, there is a struggle for dominance ("Is Gender Necessary," 169). Ai struggles to control his emotions, his sexuality and his art. In spite of his education and training he is a "male chauvinist."

As much as Ai would like to deny that he is a product of a dynamic, aggressive, "ecology-breaking" culture, he cannot. His aggressive approach to sled pulling and his initial feeling of comfort amid the technological advances of Orgoreyn give him away. Le Guin explores Ai's cultural alienation in the implied contrast between the Orgota creation myth and the Terran Judeo-Christian one. Directly after the Orgota myth comes Ai's account of the ice journey. His first paragraph is nostalgic and it recalls not only Estraven but Eden before the fall: "Sometimes as I am falling asleep in a dark quiet room I have for a moment a great and treasurable illusion of the past We are inside, the two of us, in shelter, at rest, at the center of all things. Outside, as always, lies

the great darkness, the cold, death's solitude (227). Earlier Ai recognized evil in the Sarf agent, Gaum, Ai claims, because of his own "criminal ancestors" (139)--a remark which resonates with allusion to the Fall. Unlike Eve who is successfully tempted by the serpent, Estraven resists the beautiful temptation of Gaum. While the allusions to Judeo-Christian myth are unconscious on Ai's part, they are ironically viewed by Le Guin who finds Christian myth empty (Le Guin, "Ketterer," 139).

The Judeo-Christian myth further parallels Genly Ai's original sense of the polarities of light and dark, beginning and end. In the Old Testament creation there is a real sense of a benevolent deity and that Adam and Eve come into a world of beauty and love, whereas in the Orgota version the creator or life force is impersonal and the primary emotion experienced is fear. In the Christian story, man is evicted from Paradise because of an act of pride and disobedience, while in the Orgota story there is no sense of judgment, good and evil are not personified. Many writers have remarked on the great appeal of Taoism for Le Guin and how its philosophy pervades her work, especially The Left Hand of Darkness (Bain 209-22, Barbour 167, Bittner 364-397). Le Guin obviously sets up Ai as a conventional young man who sees dark and light in polarities like good and evil but does not see their correlation, and does not see it in himself. By contrast Estraven, the Handdara adept, does not view Gaum as being evil, but sees him as stupid and without the wit or size of spirit to see things as they are.

Further one can see that Genly Ai's distrust and suspicion of anything feminine and womanly in Gethenian culture is rooted in his home-world myth of creation. In the Orgota myth the feminine is given an equal if not predominant place in creation. Edondurath the mother is named while the father is not identified. Furthermore, concepts traditionally viewed as feminine--matter, the body and sexuality--embody civilizing influences in the Orgota myth. Sexuality is the powerful force which turns a murderer into a mother. On the other hand, in the Christian myth Eve's creation is from Adam's rib. Hence the notion of "the second sex." Eve's weakness and her complicity in tempting Adam have historically been seen as her special responsibility for the fall and the reason for her trials and tribulation in childbirth and child rearing (Cole, 107). Many of the early Church fathers argued that the nature of sex changed after the fall; its legacy being concupiscence or passion uncontrolled by reason (Cole, 91). Their fear of sexual passion and of women exists as an undercurrent in twentieth-century attitudes and informs Genly Ai's attitude in particular. As Le Guin herself has said, Genly Ai's mental baggage is representative of a very specific time and place: "I see him [Genly Ai] as a very ordinary young man who learns a good deal--a nice young man but kind of stuffy, very conventional, taking (unrealistically) a pretty 1960's young American view of men and women" ("Laginappe," 281).

Le Guin's final irony is Ai's misunderstanding of the

foretelling ritual and the vision it provides. In her Introduction to the second edition of The Left Hand of Darkness Le Guin states that science fiction is descriptive, not predictive (156). Science fiction describes what is possible or what the science-fiction author has apprehended as truth or even, hopefully, what the gods have spoken through her/him. She does not view fiction which simply extrapolates from a present trend into a dismal future as true science fiction. For her the true method of science fiction is not logic but symbol or metaphor. In her Introduction, then, I think Le Guin is giving the reader a clue about how he should understand the foretelling ritual--its significance is not so much in its prediction as its description of how things are in an eternal present of truth. This would be especially likely in a culture which has no developed notion of progress and whose sense of time (the current year is always numbered "one") emphasizes the importance of the present. Indeed, their ahistorical numbering of years suggests that this culture is closer to what Eliade calls mythic time than to linear, historical time (54).

Le Guin in her Introduction also implies that the creative process of the inspired, visionary artist through whom the gods speak, is similar to that of the foretelling ritual which is able to see things whole. Le Guin's notion of visionary artist resembles Jung's notion of visionary creation in which the artist is inspired by "a primordial experience which surpasses man's understanding Sublime

pregnant with meaning, yet chilling the blood with its strangeness, it arises from timeless depths; glamorous, daemonic, and grotesque, it bursts asunder our human standards of value and aesthetic form, a terrifying tangle of eternal chaos, a crimen laesae magestatis humanae ("Psychology and Literature," 90). Le Guin also suggests that the mythic artist is in part schizophrenic (like the zanies), androgynous, making use of sexual tension (both oversexed like the perverts and dormant like the celibates) and, a weaver of patterns beyond the logic of words to express.

A real indication that Ai fails to understand the foreteller's work and the place of myth is his term "domestication of hunch." On the contrary, Ai learns on his visit to the Otherhord Fastness that the undertaking of the Foretellers was "a hard and dangerous one" (63); the outcome for the foretellers of the Lord of Shorth's question was catatonia and death. Although Ai later accepts the wholeness of their vision, he writes: "They have tamed and trained the hunch, but not increased its certainty" (194). The lack of certainty of their answers is a detraction for him from their ultimate work. Moreover, he still speaks of training or controlling intuitive processes. The point that Le Guin seems to be making about foretelling (and about creativity) is that it is a kind of discipline which does not shut out but leaves one open and receptive. Ai's phrase suggests that the adepts are taming "the hunch," but rather they are training themselves so as not

to be destroyed by the powerful unconscious contents (or hunch) that must pass through them. Indeed, when Ai is pulled into the Foretellers' web and he tries to exert control by setting up a mental barrier, he becomes trapped in his own unconscious, his obsessions and fragmented sense of things. The particular unhappiness of Genly Ai's phrase "domestication of hunch" is underlined when Estraven later uses the word to describe Ai's treatment at the prison camp: "They may have not so much have been questioning as domesticating you" (186). "Domestication" in this context has connotations of emasculation and sterilization. "Domestication" also has the connotation for the Terran of taming and civilizing as one would tame a lesser order; animals (which do not exist on Gethen) and aborigines. Ai is expressing an implied superiority while Le Guin deliberately sabotages his terminology.

Genly Ai never openly hazards any guess as to the meaning of the foretelling vision: "a woman dressed in light. The light was silver, the silver was armor, an armored woman with a sword. The light burned sudden and intolerable, the light along her limbs, the fire and she screamed aloud in terror and pain . . ." (67). The vision is deeply mysterious and multi-faceted, but it is also powerful because the reader can apprehend some of its symbolism. One can immediately see in this woman Estraven or the woman that Estraven becomes when "he" is in kemmer, a woman who is so profoundly disturbing because of Ai's awareness that Estraven is also a man. Hence

the armour and sword. One can also see in this vision Ai's own anima that he projects onto Estraven: the embattled, highly defended feminine side of himself.

The fire and pain of the vision are as well emblems of Estraven's violent death: "a light sprang up somewhere . . . he did not stop, but flashed on towards the fence, and they shot him down before he reached it. They did not use the sonic stunners but the foray gun, the ancient weapon that fires a set of metal fragments in a burst" (267-68). Further fuel to this interpretation is Ai's description of Estraven's stunning effect upon him in Mishnory: "The man was like an electric shock" (128). Finally there is some recognition of the importance of Estraven to the success of the Ekumenical Mission, of the mythic significance of his friend's sacrifice when Genly Ai says: "for the first time it came plainly to me, that, my friend being dead, I must accomplish the thing he died for. I must set the keystone in the arch" (272). From the distance of "hardened heart" and "clear mind," Ai makes the connection between the woman of the vision and Estraven but, tragically, does not see her as an element of his own unconscious, and does not uncover his own mythic role.

The vision has an archetypal resonance, for the woman is also Athene springing fully armed with a mighty shout from the forehead of Zeus. The violence of the vision is also the violence of Athene's birth, both being a reaction to the suppression of what Graves would argue was Athene's nymph

aspect (99) or what Neumann would suggest was her pre-Hellenic, Cretan mother-goddess form, associated with sexual fertility and vegetation mysteries (80). Similarly, Genly Ai's problem like Zeus's is a headache. Genly Ai works so hard at mentally repressing his feminine side and his sexuality that his head or ego-consciousness hurts. The woman of the vision is also his feminine side, in one sense hidden by armour and, in another, armed to fight through his continual repression. One of the vision's most potent weapons is moreover "erotic rage" (67).

When Ai's mission is accomplished and he brings his silver spaceship down, it is a disturbing experience for him, chiefly because of the sexuality of his crew members: "They were like a troupe of great, strange animals of two different species; great apes with intelligent eyes, all of them in rut, in kemmer . . ." (279).

In the course of Ai's three years on Gethen he has come to prefer the merely human faces of Gethenians in their neutral phase. Estraven records Ai's remarks about his alienation from women of his race and his relative comfort with Estraven with whom he shares one sex. Ai later writes: "it was from the difference between us, not from the affinities and likenesses, but from the difference, that the love came; and it was itself the bridge, the only bridge across what divided us. For us to meet sexually would be for us to meet once more as aliens" (235). It is the difference (partially sexual) which attracts him to Estraven but it is also the

different sexuality which he fears. What Ai says here in fact could be said of any relationship between a man and a woman which begins on a platonic level and for whom the sexual encounter is potentially terrifying because one or both are uncomfortable with their sexuality. In a sense Genly Ai is more comfortable with "mind speech," a form of communication so intimate that dishonesty is impossible. When Ai first meets Faxe, it is as though once again he meets his anima: ". . . I felt an awe of him. In that noon sunlight he shone of his own light. He was as tall as I, and slender, with a clear, open and beautiful face" (60). Ai is immediately moved to bespeak him, his impulse almost like sexual desire. Later Ai is quite content to let mind speech displace discourse or sexual intercourse with Estraven. Hence Ai's discomfort with his own race and their readily apparent sexuality when they are reunited.

This penultimate scene serves to point out what Ai has not learned.⁴ Le Guin has written that the presence of the archetypal vision always carries the message of the necessity of changing one's life ("Myth and Archetype in Science Fiction," 78). Ai does not so much change his life as find in his mission and in his love of Estraven a way of avoiding his life. Furthermore, Le Guin's fiction always tells us that true journey implies a return. But Ai is too caught up in the Gethenian model of humanity to assess what he has learned about his own. Finally let's listen to what Le Guin says about "androgyny" in the novel: "Yes, indeed the people in

it are androgynous but that does not mean that . . . I think we damned well ought to be androgynous. I'm merely observing . . . we already are . . . I am describing certain aspects of psychological reality in the novelist's way . . ." ("Introduction to The Left Hand of Darkness," 158).

Le Guin is not using Genly Ai to suggest that ambisexuality offers a higher, more preferable state of existence, but rather to suggest that where Genly Ai fails (indeed where many fail) is in his inability to perceive and accept his own androgynous psyche and nature.⁵ Genly Ai finally wishes to negate his body, his sexuality and his feminine self.

In the frame of Le Guin's story, one of the myths that is evoked is that of Orpheus. Genly Ai carries an aura of immortality with him because of his space travel. His special charms are not music but his ship, his ansible, his mind speech. By leaving his world for this mission as First Mobile on Gethen he has agreed to cultural and sexual isolation. Yet, as he tells Estraven, he volunteered for this job, and this admission has all the ring to it of running away to the Foreign Legion. Almost as if entering a monastery Ai has chosen to forgo the company of women. This Orpheus' Eurydice is the feminine within himself, the sexual side of his nature. In a wonderful reversal of chthonic descent, it is up on the Gobrin ice fields that Ai recovers his Eurydice in the form of Estraven.

In Le Guin's portrayal of the Gobrin ice field she has powerfully evoked a psychic underworld. It is, as has

already been shown, a place of death and, because of its "white weather" or "Unshadow," a place of insubstantiality, a place of apparently bodyless images. The volcanoes with their smoke and smell of sulphur are topographical portents too. The smoke suggests the quality of the soul halfway between spirit and body while sulphur symbolizes the special undersense of the soul, that is, smell. James Hillman argues that the psychic underworld is the place of dreams and of imagination and in its imaginative activities are constant renewal and soulmaking (26-27). This insight illuminates Estraven's journal entry: "We creep infinitesimally northward through the dirty chaos of a world in the process of making itself. Praise then Creation unfinished!" (216). The ice and utter coldness also suggest Hades, for the ninth circle of Dante's *Inferno* is icebound. This ninth circle is also the region where Dante places Cain, Judas and Lucifer. In the unconscious this is the area of "archetypal crystallizations, the immovable depressions and the mutisms of catatonia" (Hillman, 169). In this glacial region we uncover a further profundity to Le Guin's story: "We can meet Cain, Judas, and Lucifer by being aware of our own desires to be false and to betray, to kill our brother and to kill ourselves, that our kiss has death in it and that there is a piece of the soul that would live forever cast out from both human and heavenly company" (Hillman, 169). This icy hatefulness is reflected to a lesser extent in Ai's reaction to Estraven's methodical and tyrannical discipline:

"I hated him at such times, with a hatred that rose straight up out of the death that lay within my spirit. I hated the harsh, intricate, obstinate demands that he made on me in the name of life" (232). This twin aspect of love and betrayal in Genly Ai's relationship to Estraven is something that Ai becomes aware of and admits to at the end of the story.

Genly Ai's recovery of his "Eurydice" is signalled by the way he drops his barriers with the reader as well as with Estraven from "On the Ice" until Estraven's death. He admits to his sexual desires, his hatred and his love. Moreover when Ai mindspeaks Estraven, Estraven hears the voice of his dead kemmering, a Gethenian equivalent to what would be for Ai a spouse. Because the reader is told that mindspeech cannot lie, this meeting on the ice field has all the suggestion of reunion.

Like the classical Orpheus who breaks his promise not to look backward for Eurydice until she has returned to the daylight world, Genly Ai breaks his promise not to complete his and Estraven's political mission until Estraven has returned to daylight and respectability. The fool's errand is not only Ai's Ekumenical mission, the success of which he has come to view with ambivalence, nor is it only Ai's visit to Estre to find solace or to "come home." The fool's errand is also Ai's attempt to tell his and Estraven's story not only in his "report" but in the way he will answer the questions of Estraven's family which close the book. His story will not redeem Estraven but will make Estraven's moral situation as

complex and difficult as it has always been. Estraven's death has the taint of suicide about it and Genly Ai has complicity in this ultimate betrayal. In the place where it matters most, his true home, with the people it most concerns, his family, Estraven cannot be forgiven--his exile will not be revoked.

The theme of guilt and betrayal is central to the other myth evoked by the story, that of Apollo and Hyacinth. Genly Ai's "Orphic" knowledge descends from the heavens, solar and Apollonian, making him Estraven's apparent superior. In Estraven's unintentional sacrifice to Genly Ai's mission is an evocation of Hyacinth's accidental death by Apollo's hand. In Ovid the grieving Apollo holds his lover in his arms just as Ai holds the dying Estraven. In the classical myth Hyacinth and Apollo are both male and their appearance in The Left Hand of Darkness emphasizes the fact that Estraven and Ai share a masculine sexuality. Le Guin's subtler statement is, however, that they both share a feminine aspect as well.

In a further sharing of roles both Hyacinth and Apollo are evoked by each of the protagonists in The Left Hand of Darkness. In Ovid the myth ends with the god transforming Hyacinth into a flower and inscribing his own cry of grief on the petals with the letters AI(x, 211-213). Yet it is Estraven in his story who recognizes the cry of pain in Genly's name (218), as if Ai is not aware of his own pain until he loves Estraven. Similarly, when Genly Ai first meets Estraven, the Hyacinth figure in the story, he prefers to talk about him as

a neuter (a mule) or a scheming woman but he is forced to admit Estraven's Apollonian aspect: "one feels the man's power as an augmentation of his character . . . (he has) a solidness of being, a substantiality, a human grandeur I feel and respond to his authority as surely as I do to the warmth of the sun" (emphasis mine, 13).

James Bittner suggests that Le Guin sets herself a role as artist whose ancestral model is the Orpheus figure: "In that sense, the trip into the Orphic darkness that most of her characters make is a trip she herself makes as an artist whenever she writes a story It is always an aesthetic journey. In each case, the message Le Guin returns with is a version of the invocation Estraven murmurs every night as he goes to sleep: 'Praise then darkness and creation unfinished'" (119-20). Walter Strauss in his study of the Orphic theme in modern literature argues that "Orpheus becomes the mythical figure who affirms death-within-life, being-within-becoming" (17). Orpheus represents the paradoxical unity of death and song or the solar enlightenment of Apollo and the subterranean knowledge of Dionysus. Genly Ai cannot claim such paradoxical unity, but Le Guin employs him as a paradigm of failure, and through his suffering and failure she suggests a more complete vision.

The message of praise despite mutability and loss has overtones of Rilke in it (Bittner, 93-95, 120, 130-31) and of Rilke's Sonnets to Orpheus: "Only he who has raised the lyre/

also among the shades/may with forboding, render eternal praise" (196-97). But what is the nature of this praise? In a comparable story by Le Guin "The First Report of the Shipwrecked Foreigner to the Kadanah of Derb" the speaker is a space traveller whose visit to another planet is not voluntary but accidental (The Compass Rose, 91-98). Like Ai, the speaker would agree that truth is a matter of imagination but he/she puts it in this way: "My job then is not to describe . . . the course of human history, but to tell you, perhaps at considerable length, about my great-aunt Elizabeth" (92). His story is freer, more evocative and more effectively integrates mythic materials into it with its apocalyptic stone lions and fairy-tale introduction. Unlike Genly Ai's story there is no real sense of beginning and end but a constant ebb and flow.

The speaker in this story instead of describing his world in details and statistics, describes a particular place, nominally Venice, where he has been "home safe" or the place inside the speaker where he is able to "rejoin myself." Venice is fragile, decaying, close to death but at the same time vibrantly alive. The speaker's description is a kind of praise despite the deep void of space, his isolation from Earth, and his own mortality: "It is all music, and, I am home safe, listening to the profound extraordinary silence of the city of life" (97). It is not as though Genly Ai does not sing praise. He speaks of the real centre of his life, the enduring heart of warmth: "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 was hungry, overstrained, and often anxious, and it all got worse the longer it went on. 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" (227-28). But this is written in the past tense and is much less convincing than the speaker in "The First Report of the Shipwrecked Foreigners." At the end of Ai's story he hears Estraven's praiseful response to the Ice and death in Faxe's exclamation: "I am glad I have lived to see this." Ai is filled with bitter regret. He later remarks that it was the delight and courage which he most admired in the Karhidish or human spirit, but that he could not share it. The transforming and metamorphic song of Orpheus is not evident here in the same way that it is in "The First Report of the Shipwrecked Foreigner" ⁶ In Ai's narrative there is a beginning, middle and end with its climax or high point up on the ice. In a sense Ai's creation is finished, that is, his self creation in Jungian terms. This stasis effectively prevents any further celebration. The story does end with questions and thereby refers the reader to the beginning but we have already learned everything that Ai could tell us. It is not Ai's voice, however, which ends the book but a voice from the fictional world which Le Guin has created. It is the flash of Estraven's spirit in Estraven's son and his questions, from the depths of his bleak

world and his sorrow, which reflect Le Guin's Orphic vision.

Le Guin's realization of Genly Ai as an Orpheus out of balance is related to her necessity to reject the solar and enlightened vision of her father. Genly Ai is not a disguised Alfred Kroeber. But Ai's failure, in as much as it is typical of an anthropologists', is also Kroeber's. In addition, there are other significant parallels between Genly Ai and Estraven's story and that of Kroeber and Ishi as told in Theodora Kroeber's book Ishi in Two Worlds. Kroeber felt the need to protect Ishi by keeping him at the museum and by ensuring that his encounter with the outside world was not overwhelming and was for the most part on a one-to-one basis. Genly Ai, as representative of the Ekumen, is protective of the isolated and solitary world of Gethen and similarly approaches it alone so as not to appear threatening. Kroeber and the other anthropologists had to deal with the guilt resulting from their knowledge that their race was responsible for the disappearance of Ishi's people, and that even some amateur artefact collectors had looted and defiled Ishi's village. In Genly Ai's story the ancestral race of the Ekumen, the Hainish, it is suggested, bear some guilt for the existence of the Gethenians: "It seems likely that they were an experiment. The thought is unpleasant" (89). Nor is Genly Ai optimistic about how the Gethenians will fare in a universe where they will be considered freaks.

Probably the strongest link between the two stories is the theme of betrayal. Theodora Kroeber recounts that the

brightest year in Ishi's life with the museum was in 1914, the same year he went on an expedition to the valley of his people with Kroeber, Thomas Waterman and Dr. Pope. It is interesting that Ishi initially did not want to return to the place of unpleasant memories: "But - to go back! It would be like going to visit the Land of the Dead" (T. Kroeber, 206). Ishi was persuaded and, while there were psychological benefits for him, the anthropologists' motives were to do some ethnographic research by observing Ishi in his natural environment. Like Estraven who guided Ai on the trip through the deathlike landscape of the glacier, Ishi submitted to the higher cultural mission of those he was guiding. In this ethnographic adventure Ishi was a willing informant, and Theodora Kroeber writes that in his stay at the museum Ishi was never pressured to betray his true name or any secret rituals. David Brumble argues, however, that while Kroeber respected Ishi's taboos, he did not hesitate to "collect, display, or publish items sacred to Ishi or to other Indians" (40). Theodora Kroeber writes that Ishi was a willing participant because he felt that "the Yahi too should become part of the lengthening, elaborating parade which is the story of mankind" (T. Kroeber, 213). On the other hand Kroeber himself wrote that his primary interest in exotic cultures was not to help those threatened to preserve themselves but was in the isolated culture's ability to enrich our own "world culture" (Brumble, 33). In the same way that Genly Ai could be accused of exploiting or betraying Estraven's

friendship, making him commit the ultimate cultural betrayal of suicide, Kroeber could be accused of exploiting or betraying Ishi by making him unwittingly expose more than he would want of his culture. As Brumble suggests, Theodora Kroeber is ambivalent about her husband's work and therefore apologizes for it in Ishi's name.

A more clear-cut sense of betrayal is evident at Ishi's death. Kroeber was travelling in Europe when Ishi died but had previously indicated that, in accordance with Yahi belief, Ishi's body should be touched as little as possible and that no autopsy should be performed: "If there is any talk about the interests of science, say for me that science can go to hell. We propose to stand by our friends" (qtd. in T. Kroeber, A.L. Kroeber, 234). In his absence an autopsy was done violating the Yahi sense of how one should properly enter the Land of the Dead. For this violation, Kroeber must have felt real remorse. The genuine pain he felt about his relationship with Ishi, which his wife says prevented him from writing Ishi's story himself, was tinged no doubt with some guilt. The emotional Thomas Waterman expresses this guilt more immediately: "The work last summer was too much for him. He was the best friend I had in the world and I killed him . . ." (qtd. in T. Kroeber, A.L. Kroeber, 234). In these words one can clearly hear Genly Ai's grief for Estraven.

Kroeber was not an ordinary man but he was a man of his times: a secular rationalist whose foremost faith was in

the science of culture. Although he studied psychology and was a lay psychoanalyst for three years, he ultimately turned away from psychology because he felt it was less developed or less scientific than anthropology. In one of the few papers he wrote about the relationship between psychology and culture, "Psychosis or Social Sanction," he suggested that "the social rewarding of neurotic or psychotic manifestations (including shamanism) might be construed as an index of cultural backwardness or lack of progress" (300). He comments that the student of culture tries to avoid rating cultures as high or low but that such rating is unavoidable; he wonders whether there is, as with primitive peoples, something in the lives of sophisticated people which does not participate in reality but which the sophisticated accept as so participating; and finally he argues that perception of subjective and objective experience is weighted by cultural values, primitive cultures weighing subjective experience more highly. Despite the fairness of his remarks he is revealing his own cultural bias, his anxiety about what is to him the psychotic experience.

While Le Guin is much more willing to accept the validity of the psychotic dimension of shamanism in The Left Hand of Darkness, in a recent short story "The Pathways of Desire," she expresses ideas which distinguish her even more from her father. In this story three anthropologists are investigating a distant planet, Yirdo, which appears to have a sterile culture (The Compass Rose, 177-210). The

anthropologists' interest, however, in the physical or objectively verifiable world of the young Ndif leads them to ignore the culturally more interesting older Ndif, most of whose creative activity takes place in a trance or dream state. Furthermore, it is only through one of the anthropologists' dreams that they discover how the Ndif culture has been created or transmitted, that they discover in fact that the Yirido culture is a psychic accident. Again the limitation of Kroeber's approach is implied.

Kroeber wrote that cultural contents are arbitrary: "all social creations -- institutions, beliefs, codes, styles, grammars -- prove on impartial analysis to be full of inconsistencies and irrationalities. They have sprung not from a premeditated system of weighted or reasoned choices but from impulsive desires, from emotionally coloured habits or from 'accidents' happening in some other part of the culture" (Anthropology, 248, emphasis mine).

In "The Pathways of Desire" Le Guin deepens this argument by suggesting that by some accident of maya the fantasies of an ordinary teenaged boy on Earth and the psychic needs of the Ndif have crossed and fertilized each other--a truly great leap from her father's cautious statement. Moreover Le Guin suggests that a culture's myths, its language (poetry), music and dance originate from a dream state or psychosis. Le Guin draws a parallel between the primitive's desire for meaning and order and the artist's desire. In

fact, I think she is suggesting that to be an artist, especially a mythic artist, even in a sophisticated society, one must value the subjective, unconscious and supernatural as much if not more than the objective or empirical experience.

Le Guin's Orphic journey is one that her father could not complete. Although he loved poetry he could not relax his analytical mind enough to write it himself; the discipline of his myth studies was too strong to let myths write through him. With this intellectual tradition behind her, it seems natural that Le Guin would have an academic career, even a distinguished one.⁷ At the same time it is not surprising that she gained confidence in her creative writing and her identity as a writer relatively late, indeed after her father's death. There is no question that Le Guin admired and respected her father, but as a writer venturing into the underworld of fantasy and science fiction, Alfred Kroeber was an influence from whom she had to free herself and turn away.

Endnotes

¹ David Ketterer's criticism of The Left Hand of Darkness that its "plot turns rather too inexorably and predictably in its seasonal groove," does not recognize this double layer of authorship. He writes of Genly Ai as a weaver, implying that the "unity of awareness" is his. He speaks of "myths" being "injected" into the story to reinforce mythic patterns in the plot but he does not differentiate between Ai's injection and Le Guin's manipulation of Ai (288-97).

² Most writers have either ignored the issue of the authoring consciousness of the book (Douglas Barbour, 167 , or David Ketterer, see above), or, they have assumed that Genly Ai is the authoring consciousness (Martin Bickman, 42).

³ Kroeber in his paper "The Religion of the Indians of California," indeed, found creation myths highly significant for negative reasons. "A true creator, and a full and consistent attempt at an account of the creation, are found nowhere else in North America Even the important characteristic of the presence of creation myths is in a measure a negative one, for from a world view some approach to such a myth may be expected among most peoples, whether primitive or civilized

and it is primarily only in America that special bents of mind and of religious thought have supplanted the idea of creation by the culture hero, the tribal history, and other conceptions " (345).

⁴ The paradigm for this scene is Gulliver's Travels. See Susan Wood (168).

⁵ In this I disagree with Barbara Brown (234), who claims that Genly Ai accepts the androgyny of his own nature.

⁶ Indeed, there is much echoing of Rilke's 13th sonnet to Orpheus in Le Guin's "The First Report"

Be ahead of all parting, as if it were behind you
like the winter that is now going.
For among winters one [winter] is so endlessly winter
that, hibernating, your heart endures at all.

Be ever dead in Eurydice—ascend more singing,
more praising climb back into pure relatedness.
Here, among the vanishing be, in the realm of decline,
be a sounding glass that shattered in its sound.

Be—and know at the same time the condition of nonbeing,
the infinite ground of your intimate vibration,
so that you can accomplish it completely this one time.

To the used as well as to the dull and mute
store of full nature, to the uncountable sums,
add yourself jubilantly and annul the amount.

Sei allem Abschied voran, als wäre er hinter
dir, wie der Winter, der eben geht.
Denn unter Wintern ist einer so endlos Winter,
dass, überwinternd, dein Herz überhaupt übersteht.

Sei immer tot in Eurydike—singender steige,
preisender steige zurück in den reinen Bezug.
Hier, unter Schwindenden, sei, im Reiche der Neige,
sei ein klingendes Glas, das sich im Klang schon zerschlug.

Sei—und wisse zugleich des Nicht-Seins Bedingung,
den unendlichen Grund deiner innigen Schwingung,
dass du sie völlig vollziehst dieses einzige Mal.

Zu dem gebrauchten sowohl, wie zum dumpfen und stummen
Vorrat der vollen Natur, den unsäglichen Summen,
zähle dich jubelnd hinzu und vernichte die Zahl.

- a) In both there is a recognition of death and mortality
which is not morbid but celebratory, even jubilant.
- b) In both there is reference to shattering glass. The sonnet
to Orpheus says: "in the realm of decline,/be a sounding
glass that shattered in its sound." In Le Guin's story
there is the sense of being in touch with pure being by
entering a mind space of pure sound, that is, both the noisy
silence of "Venice" and the remembered and thus recreated
sounds of "Venice," e.g. glass breaking in the morning (96).
- c) In both there is reference to winter. In Rilke's sonnet
winter is something to be outlasted, a season to be "under-
stood and experienced as the other side of life, this fusion

of death and life achieving its fullest being in pure relatedness--the midpoint at which opposites merge" (Strauss, Descent and Return, 197). In Le Guin's story, winter in Venice is seen as a necessary completion of the speaker's life. The speaker does not deny the cold and sense of mourning of Venice at this season but evokes its elegance and beauty--the infinite ground of its intimate vibration.

⁷ Le Guin has written that she disappointed her father in marrying before completing her Ph.D., "'marrying a Ph.D. was the easy copout!'" (Cassel, 1).

Chapter III

Orpheus as Shaman in The Lathe of Heaven

The clearest manifestation of the Orpheus myth in Le Guin's work occurs in The Lathe of Heaven. Here we find the essential components of the myth: dream as the entrance to the psychic underworld, George Orr as Orpheus, Heather LeLache as Eurydice lost and found and lost and Dr. Haber as the snake that kills Eurydice. But the turtle-like Aliens and shamanistic powers of Orr also evoke sacred elements of North American Indian myth and religion--an important area of A.L. Kroeber's anthropological research.¹ These Indian elements emphasize the positive side of the story and its theme of creation and world renewal. A sharp contrast exists in the story between Orr the creator and Dr. Haber the controller, yet their relationship is symbiotic, so much so that on one level the story can be interpreted as a parable of one psyche. Furthermore I will argue that A.L. Kroeber is a model for this embattled psyche.

To begin let us consider how George Orr evokes Orpheus. First of all, Orr enters an underworld of the psyche by means of dreams. It is also a place of death for, as James Hillman argues in The Dream and the Underworld, its reality is non-physical, non-material (46). Orr, like Orpheus, possesses a

nonviolent nature. He is not a musician but he is gifted with "an equanimity, a perfect certainty as to where he was and where everything else was" (139). He also possesses the quality in being nothing but himself, of being everything. It is this quality which charms the "black widow" LeLache, and which allows him to communicate with the turtle-like Aliens. He also is gifted or cursed with the ability to dream effectively. That is, under stress his dreams change the world and change it retroactively. In this way he is, like Orpheus, able to enter or to visit the underworld and to change the course of history by bringing back the dead. This ability is problematic, though, because he is able to take life as well as give it. In Orr's case his powers extend past the personal. When the world, Orr included, is dying in a nuclear holocaust Orr miraculously dreams it back to life.

Orr himself feels that some greater power is acting through him. Similarly Orpheus' music is a gift from the gods. His ability to retrieve Eurydice from the Underworld is subject to the sanctions of Hades and his severed, prophesying head is eventually commanded by Apollo to be silent. Unlike Orpheus, Orr does have a sense of responsibility and guilt for changing history; he realizes that his gift is both terrible and miraculous. His aunt dies prematurely because of his death wish for her. People die each time he dreams for Dr. Haber: he loses Heather.

The connection with Orpheus and Eurydice is further

established when Dr. Haber and George argue over Haber's use of George's dreams. Haber sees his control as providing necessary, anti-entropic change and Orr sees it as interference. Haber asks Orr whether if he saw a woman dying from snake bite and he had snake bite serum he would administer it? Orr later sees Haber's analogy as false: "He [Haber] was talking about one person meeting another in pain. That's different You have to help another person. But it's not right to play God with masses of people" (136). Shortly after this he dreams Heather, who had disappeared with the emergence of the gray people, back to life as his wife. In a sense he administers the snake bite serum just as Orpheus did for Eurydice.

George enters the underworld of dreams and death one last time in a reversal of the Orpheus myth. It is Heather's following him into Hades that compels Orr to warn her and to look back at her one last time. It is her love that "helps" him descend-- "'What the hell, George!'" (164)--and which moves him to look backward and warn her, thus precipitating her fall "forever through the dry abyss" (165). She gets too close to the void and, being a creature of George's own dreaming she is reclaimed by unbeing. When Orr looks back at Heather he acknowledges that she is an anima figure, a projection in which LeLache's hard, difficult edges have been compromised, and that she must be sacrificed: "He knew as he went that he would lose all he had" (166). The comparable lines from Ovid are: "if back thou cast/Thy carefull eyes, thou loosest what thou hast"

(Book x, 51-52).

The reversal of entering rather than leaving the underworld signifies that the only way out of Hades is for Orr to descend deeper into it and to confront his own dreaming and the fact that the mess the world is in is partially a reflection of Orr's state of mind, Orr's problems. When Haber tries to exert control over what is an unconscious process, like Genly Ai during the foretelling ritual, he gets lost in that chthonic realm. In Haber's case, however, the chaotic unconscious because of his heightened powers invades the "waking time" of the world. Portland, Oregon, the safest of cities goes surreal. It takes all of Orr's psychic energy to break Haber's overbearing, synthetic dream and to reestablish the balanced, yet numinous dream of his nameless gods.

George and Heather are reunited after Haber is stopped. Heather has a different identity and an incomplete memory of the past, but Orr's recognition of her is timeless: "But now his dry and silent grieving for his lost wife must end, for there she stood, the fierce, recalcitrant, and fragile stranger, forever to be won again" (175). In his recognition there is as well an echo of Orpheus and Eurydice's reunion which occurs in the Elysian fields in Ovid's Metamorphoses.

These classical elements conflate with American Indian myth in The Lathe of Heaven. For Orr's role in the book clearly resembles that of the shaman. Indeed Åke Hulthkrantz suggests that the North American Indian Orpheus narratives in

their entire structure testify to their shamanistic origin (241). Andreas Lommel in Shamanism makes a distinction between the medicine man and the shaman. The medicine man is "usually of pre-eminent intelligence and possessed of a definite power urge" (9). His powers outside medical ability and conjuring tricks are based in a gift for suggestion and hypnosis. The shaman "in contradistinction to the medicine man, however . . . always acts in a state of trance" (9). Moreover, while the medicine man may choose his profession, the shaman's identity comes to him involuntarily: "The future shaman, the young man suited for shamanizing, is a sick man. He suffers from psychopathic or epileptic states and is often physically ill. He cannot escape the demands of the spirits, which drive him deeper and deeper into the illness, although he very often tries to resist. He gets into a situation, into a mental illness, from which he can find no way out but death or the assumption of the office of the shaman" (11). Furthermore the shaman's activity is always artistic whether it involves singing, dancing, painting or even theatrical production. Orr's driven dreaming and creativity clearly suggest that he is a shaman figure. Haber's willed power makes him more like a medicine man.

Further parallels yet exist between Orr and the shaman. The shaman's descent into psychic depths is often reported in Orphic terms as a journey to the underworld and the world of the dead. The shaman cures himself through his psychic descents in a healing process which is undertaken again and again

just as with Orr's recurrent dreaming. The shaman also affects the community, draws in the audience. His social function "consists above all in bringing psychic calm and confidence to the tribal community by revitalizing and intensifying its notions of the world" (Lommel, 12). Similarly Orr's cure meta-physically affects the stability of his community and his world.

Another significant parallel in The Lathe of Heaven to shamanism is the shaman's relationship with guardian spirits, usually in animal form: ". . . the result of the long and painful period of preparation is seen as the acquisition of increased psychic power through the shaman's command of 'helping spirits'. Helping spirits in various, generally fantastic shapes or in the form of exceptionally large animals show themselves to the shaman in visions and place themselves at his command. He can call them whenever he wishes" (Lommel 59). In The Lathe of Heaven, Orr in fact calls for help from his friends and guardian spirits, the giant turtle-like aliens. With their help he accepts his gift ("iaklu") and is able to heal himself.

The presence of the turtle/aliens in the story has further resonance. They are numinous or archetypal images that have irrupted from Orr's unconscious; they descend from the heavens and yet they are creatures of Orr's psychic underworld. They are on an every day level good businessmen but George senses that they "possessed a strange, large beauty, a serener beauty than that of any dweller in sunlight, any walker on the

earth" (137). They are both practical and unearthly. They have a definite physical form, being nine feet tall and turtle-like, but their true form and much of their identity remains hidden--they are in this sense bodyless images. Finally George senses that the Aliens are indestructible and unknowable and, despite his having invented them, that he has always had a connection with them.

Two points are especially remarkable about the Aliens: they are presented as having both a sense of humour and superior knowledge of dreams. The humour they bring to the story is alien to its tone and to Orr's despair, but it is in keeping with the trickster aspect of the unconscious to which the aliens are allied. They land on April Fool's day and in a manner evocative of Orson Welles' broadcast reveal the "war of the worlds" as a hoax. The Alien's opening remark to Haber: "Is this a military installation?" is in fact an ironic comment on his whole approach to dream and reality. The initial misunderstanding of the Aliens, their mistaking Earth's missiles as a kind of primitive form of communication, is in itself a subtle joke on Earth.

The Alien's traffic in junk and simple cooking implements alludes to the creative function of dream work. Hillman says that dreams in fact digest bits and pieces of the day, converting the day's facts into images: "The dream is less a comment on the day than a digestive process of it, a breakdown and assimilation of the day world within the labyrinthine

tracts of the psyche. The dream-work cooks life into psychic substance by means of imaginative modes . . ." (96). The collecting of junk, the ease of accepting what comes, is a recognition of the psyche's unending need for raw materials. The Aliens' quotidian identity with cooking equipment and other such "material goods" are necessary to re-establish parameters between dream and reality, to renew a sense of order.

The Aliens have a special connection with dreams and psychic life. George tells Haber: "they're a lot more experienced than we are at all this At dreaming--at what dreaming is an aspect of. They've done it for a long time. For always, I guess. They are of the dream time" (161). Orr's words thus place the Aliens in the mythic cosmos of the psyche and add to the reader's perception of the Aliens as archetypal presences through whom the gods speak. They are also aliens in the sense that this dream-time (Eliade,) is alienated from man in Orr's world.²

Gary Snyder tells us that the name "Turtle Island" is the old/new name for the continent "found in North American creation myths and that the name also refers to the "idea found world-wide, of the earth, or cosmos, even sustained by a great turtle . . ." (Turtle Island, introductory note). This belief is particularly true of the Seri Indians of the Gulf of California who principally subsist on turtle meat and who were one of the cultures A.L. Kroeber lived with and studied (T. Kroeber 161-62). Indeed the turtle has become a symbol of lost

ecological balance, the turtle's shell and the natural world that grew from it being an Eden that man has desecrated in his decision to improve or change it (Rudloe, 201). Above all the turtle/aliens in the novel come to symbolize dream or mythic time, psychic grounding and world renewal.

Opposed to the Aliens in their relationship to Orr is William Haber. Orr realizes that the Aliens and indeed the world are on his side because he dreamt the Aliens and much of the world into its present form. Then he makes this distinction: "Only Haber's different, and more different with each dream. He's against me: my connection with him is negative. And that aspect of the world which he's responsible for, which he ordered me to dream, that's what I feel alienated from, powerless against . . ." (150).

If Orr's approach to the underworld is that of Orpheus then Haber's is that of Hercules. Haber tells Orr that his day-dreams have frequently to do with heroics: "'I am the hero. I'm saving a girl, or a fellow astronaut, or a beseiged city, or a whole damn planet. Messiah dreams, do-gooder dreams. Haber saves the world! They're a hell of a lot of fun . . ." (36). Haber's connection to Orr is confirmed by this remark for this is exactly what Orr has done and does: he has saved a city and a whole damned planet, he does save the girl, and the fellow astronaut he tries to save may well be Haber. Yet Haber has no sense of a spiritual or noumenal dimension so that his concept of a messiah would be a superhuman such as Hercules.

Haber tells George that when he has George's power to dream effectively "this world will be like heaven, and men will be like gods!" Haber's notion of heaven is an earthbound utopia. George's answer points out that Haber's notion recognizes only one side of man's being: "We are, already gods . . ." (145). In the mythology of the psyche Hercules represents the ego of the conscious world. Unlike Ulysses and Aeneas who descend into the underworld to learn and "revision" their lives in the upperworld, Hercules "goes down to take and he continues with the muscular reactions of the upperworld, testing each phantom for its reality, e.g. at the vision of the Gorgoneion, he drew his sword, and Hermes had to inform him that it was an image" (Hillman, 112).

Orr initially senses Dr. Haber's doubts that other people existed and senses that Haber's need to help his patients was in fact a desire to prove their existence or to make them real. Haber's perspective dictates that a personality can be made only by a strong ego coping with tough problems in a real world of facts. Haber's treatment of George on his first visit is to downplay the frightening aspect of George's dreams through scientific or physical manipulation. Later Haber tells George that George is afraid of the power of his own mind. Forgetting any link with deeper reality, Haber informs Orr that if he uses dreams to accomplish good works in the conscious world he will overcome his fear of the unconscious and be able to ignore it. Haber wants Orr to use his dreams to strengthen ego.

Haber goes mad just as Hercules does before his death.³ Orr understands what had maddened Haber: "He knew what Haber was looking at. He had seen it himself. He was looking at the world after April 1998. He was looking at the world as misunderstood by the mind; the bad dream" (171). Haber, like the Herculean or heroic ego, is driven mad by the psychic underworld whose reality is composed of images, for his sanity is based on a reality he can grapple with, run a sword through or bash with a club. Hillman elaborates on heroic madness: "A view of reality that does not recognize other views is of course delusional. In the heroic ego's case, the delusion is self-divinization, the perspective of the human ego as the superior, indeed the only actuality" (115).

To return to Orr's statement about what Haber sees that drives him to madness, it is significant that Orr's words imply a share in that misunderstanding, in that bad dream. That the world ended in 1998 is not in question. Orr is able to survive the trauma because he has something beneath heroic consciousness to sustain him, while Haber does not.

Orr partakes in the misunderstanding of mind in as much as he partakes in his culture or his time with its rational, scientific grounding, its faith in good social or political acts to cure all ills, its denial and ignorance of death and, thus, of psychic reality. Haber is then a kind of personification of the heroic ego of Western civilization. It is this misunderstanding of the world by the western mind or

ego which precipitated its violent destruction. The chaotic violence of Haber's dream was inevitable: "Even should this humanistic ego be ennobled by the mission of solar hero or culture hero on the high plane of good works, without the other half of the hero--the Gods and death--and without the psychic trailing that holds each to his depth like the chthonic snake-form they each formerly had, 'the legends of heroes become tales of warlike men'" (Hillman, 111).

In strictly Jungian terms Haber's relationship to Orr is that of the shadow to the self and Orr's complicity in the Western misapprehension of reality is based in Orr's projection. Le Guin herself has written about the shadow in words in which we may recognize both Orr and Haber: "For the shadow is not simply evil. It is inferior, primitive, awkward, animallike, childlike, powerful, vital, spontaneous. It's not weak and decent, like the learned young man from the North; it's dark and hairy and unseemly; but without it the person is nothing" ("The Child," 64). Orr has to realize that Haber is the powerful, vital, manipulative side of himself that he has repressed just as his Aunt Ethel is the vulgar, immoral aspect of himself which he has denied.

A sign that the reader can understand Haber in this way are the animal terms in which he is described or identified as the horse on the mural; as having a smile "like a big bear-god" (33); or as when Haber considers himself a "lone wolf" (112). Le Guin also points out that in fairy tales the shadow

figure often appears as an animal, the animal being the dark brother who acts as a guide. Haber as shadow is also another of the guardian spirits of the shaman Orr. Haber in fact guides Orr into Hades and the certainty with which Haber acts is based on primitive animal instincts. Though he would protest otherwise, his approach to the underworld is primitive. The folktales usually have a twist to them which Le Guin's story mirrors: "when you have followed the animal instincts far enough, then they must be sacrificed, so that the true self, the whole person may step forth from the body of the animal, reborn" (67). For all Haber's meddling and manipulation he does bring Orr in contact with the Aliens through whom Orr is able to regain his equilibrium. It is Haber's blind instincts which force Orr to come to terms with what he experienced four years before.

The classic kinds of projection in the story, of the shadow (Haber) and the anima (LeLache), suggest as noted above that on one level The Lathe of Heaven can be read as a parable of one psyche. The psyche that Le Guin uses as a model could well be her father's, for one can see aspects of him manifested in both Orr and Haber.

George Orr physically resembles Le Guin's father especially as he is described in the poem "Warp and Weft" from the sequence "Coming of Age." Orr is short, slight, with a short beard, and physically unprepossessing. Similarly "the father" is described in "Warp and Weft" as having a "short grey

beard; a slight man, not tall." There are, of course, obvious differences between Orr and Le Guin's father. Kroeber was a disciplined intellectual whereas George Orr's intelligence is intuitive and creative. One can, however, draw interesting parallels between Le Guin's poem for her father and LeLache's sense of George when she visits him at his cabin. (Both Kroeber and Orr have retreats which are cabins in the wooded coastal mountains. Kroeber and Orr both go to their mountain retreats to recover from serious illnesses.) The poem speaks of the dimensions, the "sheer quantity" of the father's mind--the sense that ten bigots could be swamped by it. LeLache is struck by Orr's "infinite possibility, the [his] unlimited and unqualified wholeness of being" (95). In "Warp and Weft" the elephants with which the father is identified are described as gentle, graceful, patient and waiting in the same way that George who had such power waited and let his nameless gods work through him. For despite Kroeber's slight appearance there was a largeness there and a strength ("Strong as ships") just as Orr appeared to LeLache as a man who, while "his personal dignity went so deep as to be nearly invisible," was "the strongest person she had ever known" (95). LeLache describes Orr as someone she has waited thirty years to meet, in a sense the father figure she never had. Whereas for Le Guin the death of her father, in one sense "her tower of strength," when she was thirty-one marked a crucial point in her life--the end of her childhood and her coming of age.

The shadowy aspect of A.L. Kroeber is also evident in William Haber. Kroeber was for a time a psychoanalyst like Haber, but more important, as an anthropologist he was a famous, esteemed pioneer in his field. He began both as the curator of the museum and as a field researcher at the University of California at Berkeley and in no small way developed the Department of Anthropology there into a strong centre for anthropological research. On the other hand Kroeber like Haber could be accused of exploiting his subjects, his Indian informants. As was discussed in the previous chapter Kroeber accepted their "information" as a friend but this friendship did not prevent him from publishing it, that is, making it public. Moreover, the notion of the gray people as the solution to prejudice seems to mock Kroeber's concept of a one-world culture. The washed-out quality of the gray people brings to mind Kroeber's own question: "When the exhausted, repetitive stage is reached, and there is no new rival culture to take over responsibility and opportunity and start fresh with new values in a different set of patterns--what then?" (Anthropology, 384). Indeed with Haber, Le Guin seems to be suggesting that his rationalism, scientism, and totalitarianism wind him down and are inevitably self-destructive. Renewal and revitalization must come from a psychic grounding and a spiritual centre which Haber negated and which Kroeber, who said: "Anthropology is my religion" (T. Kroeber, x), never achieved.

If Orr is a shaman figure in The Lathe of Heaven,

then Le Guin would surely disagree with her father's assessment that shamanism represented a simple even backward cultural stage of development. Indeed The Lathe of Heaven can be seen as recording Le Guin's deep ambivalence towards both her father and his vision.

Endnotes

¹ Kroeber published two important books on North American Indian culture: The Handbook of the Indians of California, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1925) and Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939). For a complete bibliography see A.J. Gibson and J.H. Rowe.

² In a recent interview Le Guin elaborates on the importance of the dream time: "There are two aspects of time, and we live waking in one; but western civilization has announced that there's only one real time and it is that one. This I more or less consciously reject, and I am perpetually attempting by one metaphor and device or another in my books to re-establish the connection between the dream-time and the waking time, to say that the one depends upon the other absolutely," (George Wickes and Louise Westling, 155).

³ "Hercules had to go mad , literally, in order to understand the underside of things, maybe because his journey to Hades was a mess" (Hillman, 110).

Chapter IV

The Beginning Place as the Portrait of an Artist as a Young Girl

The presence of anthropological metaphors and a father figure are less important to The Beginning Place than they are to The Left Hand of Darkness or The Lathe of Heaven. The Orpheus myth does surface in The Beginning Place, but unlike its manifestation in Le Guin's other books, it is now evocative of a woman's experience. In fact in the second part of the story Orpheus metamorphoses into Psyche by a narrative twist. The story also bears a resemblance, in part, to the fairy tale of Beauty and the Beast which Bettelheim says is a version of the Cupid and Psyche myth (292). Le Guin did have, however, a precedent for her female Orpheus in a story collected by her father, "The Karok Orpheus Myth," in which "two women follow a man [into the land of the dead] and fail completely to bring him back."¹

The Beginning Place is the story of Hugh Rogers and Irene Pannis and their coincidental rites of passage in the underworld of Tembreabrezi. Here as in The Lathe of Heaven, the underworld, or "Tembreabrezi," is more obviously a realm of dreams and the unconscious than "the underworld" of The Left Hand of Darkness. As in "The Pathways of Desire," psychic

disturbances in the daylight-world "earth" affect events that happen in the psychic realm. As Hugh realizes, both he and Irene did not come to Tembreabrezi by accident but are intimately connected with it.

Tembreabrezi (literally "Mountain town") reveals itself as a psychic kingdom in a number of ways. In the first place time moves very slowly there and "the people" Hugh and Irene meet there live in a traditional, anachronistic way--they are outside time, in illo tempore (Eliade, 20). There is as well the changeless quality of light, neither day nor night, but twilight or gloom. It is, then, a place without shadows, without substance. Furthermore, flowers do not bloom, birds do not sing, seasons do not appear to change, suggesting that Tembreabrezi is a place midway between life and death, daylight consciousness and the deep unconscious, the realm of the personal unconscious. Both Hugh and Irene sleep in Tembreabrezi but do not dream: "Sleep in the ain country was so deep it had no dreams. I am the dream, she thought drowsily . . ." (79). In other words their actions in Tembreabrezi are already on the level of dream awareness; to go deeper would be to go below what the conscious mind can apprehend.

The pivotal character in this underworld of dream is Lord Horn, Lord of the Mountain. He is a conflation of a number of mythic characters and archetypal manifestations. His name itself refers to the two gates of dream: the gate of ivory and the gate of horn. When Hugh feeds himself peanuts while

watching television he thinks of himself as both an elephant and a caged animal. His mother's telephone calls serve to point out at the same time how false and unsatisfying both the "dreams" of television and his masturbatory fantasies are. This image of the caged elephant, I think, intentionally refers the reader to the Greek word for ivory, "elephas," and the verb "elephairo" which means to cheat with empty hopes. Lord Horn and his realm, on the other hand, represent a dream gate of horn or "Keras," that which allows things to come true or to be accomplished ("Karanoo").

Lord Horn also has characteristics which link him to Minos, the legendary king and lawgiver of Crete. For Horn, like Minos with his labyrinth, is associated with the labyrinthine countryside of Tembreabrezi. Horn's labyrinth contains a monster similar to the minotaur, to which human sacrifices have been made in the past, and to which sacrifice must be made again. The minotaur is a creature who is half man/half bull while Horn's monster is half beast/half man, more unnameable and closer to a dragon. Significantly Hugh is often described in minotaur-like imagery, so that we see the monster as intimately connected with his unconscious appetites, pain and fears. Finally, Minos, after his death, was made the supreme judge of the lower world. Initially Irene sees Horn as dessicated and self-important, but gradually she comes to respect his dignity. She also comes to respect his harsh judgment of Sark's grandfather, the grandfather who bargained with the monster, thereby

avoiding real confrontation and exacerbating fear.

Lord Horn is also a Hades figure, and nowhere is this more clear than in Irene's recognition of him: "If I reach out my hand and touch him I will see clearly, she thought. The screen will be gone and I will stand both there and here. But in that knowledge I am destroyed" (123). If she touches him she will lose her ability to return to the daylight world. Not that she would die, but she would lose her identity, becoming nothing more than a psychic entity.

The Beginning Place, as it traces the coming of age of Hugh and Irene, intertwines and conflates the myths of Orpheus, Psyche and the Minotaur. Their combined story is also enhanced by its resemblance to Perrault's fairy tale of "Beauty and the Beast." All of these narratives with their archetypal overtones suggest that a Jungian reading is appropriate for this novel, as it is for Le Guin's other mythic works discussed above. From this point of view Lord Horn is also the old man, a frequent symbol in dreams of the archetype of the spirit whose appearance represents "Knowledge, reflection, insight, wisdom, cleverness and intuition on the one hand, and on the other, moral qualities such as good will and readiness to help . . ." (Jung, "Phenomenology," 77). Horn is also the dead and absent father whom Irene recovers only to realize that she cannot touch him and that she must leave him forever.

Both Hugh's and Irene's rites of passage are highly sexual. Both experience a revulsion from the carnality of

their society which they express in a revulsion from their own sexuality. Hugh feels this in particular around his mother and her entrapping neurosis. His size and vitality are a constant reminder to her of the man who betrayed her, or of her own sexuality that caused her to betray herself. Irene, on the other hand, must fight the adolescent notion of her brother and his friends that "in being a woman, [she was] therefore subject to lust, therefore unclean" (73). Touch for Irene has always been threatening, for she has associated it with her lecherous stepfather, a manipulative roommate and, most terribly, the rape of a friend. In fact Irene and Mrs. Rogers have this distrust of touch and sexuality in common.

In a Jungian sense, it is the shadow of their parents and the recognition of it in themselves that brings Hugh and Irene to the threshold of their initiation. Hugh has always been his mother's son, no doubt blaming his father silently for their rootless unhappiness. But he slowly recognizes that his mother now sees his independence as a desertion similar to his father's and that he might have always been, in his physical resemblance and name, a constant and painful reminder to her of this desertion. Mrs. Rogers makes Hugh feel that any desire for a life of his own or any resentment he feels toward her would be disloyal, even matricidal.

Irene feels anger and frustration with a mother who has remarried so unwisely, thereby placing Irene in a difficult position with her awful stepfather. She resents her mother's

weakness and dependence on her. Irene realizes, however, that her resentment and frustration with her mother are based in Irene's own fears for herself. Irene, like her mother, could "live for twenty, thirty, fifty years after that [central glory], work and marry and bear children and all the rest, without any particular reason to do so, without desire. I am the daughter of a ghost, Irene thought" (74). In other words, she and her shadow are connected undeniably.

Once they are in Tembreabrezi, most of the characters and action can also be related to the motives, emotions and actions of Irene and Hugh. Both display a remarkable resemblance to their loved ones in Mountain Town; Irene is dark and quick and spare like the Master while Hugh and Allia ("the other") are blonde, gentle and sweet. Lord Horn remarks that Hugh and Allia could be siblings and the master's resentment and disrespect mirror Irene's. In Le Guin's fable Allia and Sark represent the anima and animus of Hugh and Irene respectively (Attebery, 121). Hugh and Irene's initial rejection of and dissatisfaction with each other is related to the fact that their human partners do not live up to the images of their unconscious projections.² Upon reflection one notices as well that Sark and Allia are rather distant and passive.

Irene's recognition of this projection is probably the most painful part of her initiation. The recognition occurs when she and the master attempt to go up the mountain on the heroic mission to save Mountain Town. When they are

not far out of the village Irene turns back to Sark and witnesses his hollowness and ineffectual essence. For the welfare of Tembreabrezi and her own psychic health, Irene must take a human partner to complete her quest and initiation. Significantly, Irene's relationship with the Master has been protected by silence while her mission in Tembreabrezi clearly requires her to speak.

In a reversal of sexual roles Irene becomes the Orpheus figure who descends into the Underworld to save her beloved. Like Orpheus, when she sings she has the power to move her audience and to make Tembreabrezi pale in comparison: "Her voice was like a child's, like a bird's voice, sudden, clear, and sweet. The voice and the craving tune made the hair stand up on Hugh's head, made his eyes blur and a tremor of terror or delight shake his body" (110). Tembreabrezi is more her country than Hugh's and consequently she is gifted with more insight into it. The "husband" that she follows into Tembreabrezi she loses; he becomes the white ghost standing "silent on the dusk road, long ago now, and always changelessly" (164). At the very moment when she is reinstalled with a sense of her dead father's love, of the father who told her: "your courage is beyond praise" (46), she must also deal with the loss of her most treasured illusions. Unlike the obsessive Orpheus of Greek myth who turned back to ensure that Eurydice was following him, Irene emerges from the underworld with a husband she no longer compares to her cherished first love.

Hugh must make a similar recognition about Allia, but his is less painful because her hold over him was briefer than Sark's over Irene. In any case the operating myth in Hugh's story is clearly that of the Minotaur. The Minotaur was born of the furious passion of Pasiphae, and the labyrinth in the classical story was built to confine and keep hidden her monstrous son. In these mythic terms one can see that Mrs. Rogers confines and hides her "monstrous" son. But Hugh is also the heroic Theseus who resolved to deliver his country from the Minotaur's demands when it came his turn to be sacrificed to the monster's appetite. In this frame Irene becomes Ariadne, "the king's daughter" who gives Theseus a thread to help him trace his way out of the maze.

The nature of Hugh's initiation is much more blind and instinctive than Irene's. He finds himself driven and thirsty for Tembreabrezi. Mountain Town is not his home in the same way that it is for Irene and his purpose in coming there is always beyond it. Once that far into Tembreabrezi, he will not be free of its obsessions until he confronts the Minotaur.³

Hugh is recognized as the one who should carry the sword--the doer and deliverer. No matter how much Irene wants to play the man's role, Hugh, because of his gender, must carry the sword--a masculine phallic appendage. Lord Horn in his wisdom tells Irene, "'You came to speak our word, he to serve our need . . . It is two that go that road'" (87). Neither can go alone or, rather, neither can successfully complete the

mission alone or accompanied solely by his/her psychic projections. Even though Hugh bears the sword, Irene must speak and lead the way--acts just as important as swordplay in the realm of dream. Their individual success, then, lies in their androgynous union or marriage.

Just as Lord Horn and the Mountain also symbolize sexuality, there is as well a sexual side to Irene and Hugh's fear in Tembreabrezi. Irene's sexual fear is the feminine one of crossing a threshold that will threaten her integrity and of bearing the consequences and responsibility of that action. At the same time Irene is caught in a conflicting fear of being locked out and left out in the cold. Hugh embodies the masculine fear of losing rational control, of not being able "to get out" or of being trapped in his obsessions.

The monster is sexuality incarnate. Hugh and Irene approach its territory through a cleft ("a raw vertical scar," 40), the image of a terrifying vulva. The monster is described as having a blind appetite and smelling of semen. The monster's death is also described in terms which suggest sexual climax: "The whistling sob rose into a scream" (155); or after: "She kept trembling and making a queer noise like 'Ao, ao'" (156). Significantly, both Irene and Hugh are repelled by the monster and identify it with their own sexuality, recognizing its ugliness in themselves. Both face the monster and touch it, thereby getting in touch with themselves and being healed by this encounter. The death throes of the dragon also suggest

the ordeal of birth labour. Hugh's fallen, blood and slime covered body is the potent image of their rebirth.

Irene, after the dragon's death, is able to see beauty in Hugh's once sluglike body: "Irene watched him, seeing the beauty of his heavy gleaming arms and throat" (162). She is also able to see that he might have a beautiful singing voice; and with this recognition she is able to overcome her fear of his desire. At the base of this change in perception is the painful insight that she is both "the dragon's daughter and the king's child" (160), a creature of "unsightly" appetite as well as soulful beauty. One senses that Irene has the potential to become a Mrs. Rogers or to remain lost irredeemably in her Tembreabrezi. Irene successfully completes her initiation, however, by realizing that her self image is neither that of the dragon nor of the princess alone.

At the point where Irene "sees" Hugh for the first time the myth governing her story changes to that of Cupid and Psyche.⁴ In this transformation other elements of the story fit. Like Venus, Mrs. Rogers is the truly jealous mother of Cupid. Irene's are like Psyche's irresponsible parents. Psyche's initial loss of Cupid by lamplight is echoed in Irene's loss of Sark. The trials of Psyche include her descent into the Underworld, as do Irene's adventures which enable her to regain Cupid in Hugh. Cupid's mother gives up and allows the couple to marry just as Mrs. Rogers concedes Hugh to Irene: "For Amor, just as for Psyche, the prospect of intimacy means

separation from the mother and an end to childhood's idyll" (Edwards, 12).

Hugh's initiation is more physically exhausting and painful. What changes in Hugh after his rebirth from the dragon is his concern for his mother; he "begins" when he symbolically kills his mother. His "appetite" changes as well and becomes not driven as before but, in his desire for Irene, "profoundly serious" (169). Irene in turn does not treat his desire as self-deluded or "elephantine." When she later speaks his name for the first time he hears it as his own name with no connotation of his despised father. He is able to see himself not only as the beast but as Theseus, the prince and hero. In this way, his story dovetails with "Beauty and the Beast" where Beauty's love releases the beast from the crone's here, specifically Mrs. Rogers', enchantment. Bettelheim in his discussion of the tale reveals that the prince's initial metamorphosis into the beast was in punishment for a former transgression (Bettelheim, 306). Former transgression in Hugh's case was his father's defilement and desertion of Mrs. Rogers. Hugh's initiation requires his separation from his mother and his escape from her web of guilt.

What is immediately striking about this story is the increased status of the woman's role. Hence the woman as Orpheus. Although Le Guin has written "rite of passage" tales before, The Beginning Place is the first one in which a woman has played such a preeminent or active role. As already

mentioned, Tembreabrezi is more Irene's place than Hugh's, she has special insight because of it, and one feels that she has experienced more of life than Hugh.

What is noteworthy about Le Guin's female novel of development compared to other contemporary fiction such as Eudora Welty's "The Landing," Lisa Alther's Kin Flicks or Maxine Hong Kingston's Woman Warrior which have Psyche as their model is the significant role of the absent or irresponsible father. Ferguson suggests that Psyche is principally aided by Aphrodite, "a strong mother figure whose motivation and essential nature she comes to share" (231). Crucial to Irene's initial problem, however, is the death of her father. His role is ambivalent for he represents "a central glory" but his absence makes his wife and children particularly vulnerable to entrapment. In her poem "Coming of Age," discussed partially in the first chapter, Le Guin writes of the profound loss that her father's death represented: of his love, of her youthful security and joy, and of her faith. His death also meant a coming of age and an acceptance of meanness, bigotry, rape and "the small kingdoms" of adulthood. This coming of age in the poem is particularly difficult to accept because of her happy memories of childhood when she was "the King's daughter" and could play on "the high hills" beyond his tower. Undoubtedly Le Guin's own coming of age informs The Beginning Place as it does previous initiation stories including The Tombs of Atuan which will be discussed in the next chapter.

In part Irene's descent into Tembreabrezi is impelled by the loss of her father and the loss of any real sense of home. Her physical resemblance to Sark and the loving, asexual nature of their relationship is that of a father and daughter. What prevents their heroic partnership is then in one sense an incest taboo. Irene, like Beauty, in this interpretation, must let go of an oedipal attachment to her father in order successfully to complete her initiation. Lord Horn's kiss and his calling Irene "daughter" are the beginning of her acknowledgment that her father is dead and, therefore, closer to the dessicated, deathlike old man than the apparently vital and handsome Sark.

I would argue that this is the first of Le Guin's major books where the male dreamer, envoy, scientist, mage or, in other words, the Kroeber-like/father figure is not a vital or active character. This is noteworthy because this absence coincides with the emergence of a strong, central female character who, moreover, has latently artistic qualities: musical ability, dark insight, knowledge of a special language, and a designated role as speaker. Thus there is an obvious irony in Irene's thoughts: "She wanted to tell him that he was beautiful and that she liked him, but she was no good at saying things" (171). Her reticence is that of the poet who cannot simply or naively say as Hugh does earlier: "You're beautiful." When Hugh asks her what she would like to do her choices are more "practical" than artistic: farming, teaching,

nursing, or raising children--pragmatic, responsible work. But in these choices, there is a similarity to Le Guin's own story. She taught at university and raised a family; it was only in her thirties that she wrote her major books and took her writing seriously. What The Beginning Place also gives us, then, is a portrait of the artist as a young girl.

The Beginning Place, I would suggest then, marks a rite of passage for Le Guin: a final acknowledgement of the death of her father and his influence on her fiction as well as an acceptance of her identity as artist. Le Guin's development appears to mirror that of the development of possibilities for the female hero beyond what the patriarchal structure would previously allow: "By the beginning of the twentieth century, novelists seem readier to abandon the project of entrapping the female heroic character and begin the task of inventing maneuvers whereby she can break out of familial, sexual and social bondage into an altered and appropriate world As a transhistorical model, heroism mediates historical phenomena by giving individuals a way to incorporate change into private life, to move with confidence into a newly constituted world, and, inevitably, to dream beyond the borders of any momentary knowledge" (Edwards, 10).

Endnotes

¹ Kroeber writes that the Karok version of the Orpheus myth reveals certain sentiments characteristically "pervading the Northwest California native culture: intense and minute attachment to familiar spots, regret and nostalgia, a desire for a small, compact, closed and unchanging world" (13). These sentiments are echoed in The Beginning Place. Adolescence is such a difficult time precisely because children are resistant to change, and do not wish to grow up. Both versions of the Karok tale begin with the girls sleeping near a river at the edge of town. The girls' dead lover either has no bones or is only a shadow so they must return without him. Kroeber suggests the reason that there is a pair of girl lovers in the Karok tales: "Possibly the idea is a device to heighten or indicate passionateness of attachment" (14).

² "With the anima and animus . . . most people are content to be self righteous and prefer mutual vilification (if nothing worse!) to the recognition of their projections," Jung, "Aion," 16.

³ In fact this may be a crucial difference between the male and female novel of development. The male hero whose

paradigm is Odysseus reaches his self awareness by testing his inner sense of self in a series of adventures in the world: active, combative and social, while the female hero typified by Psyche undertakes adventures that include an underworld descent and a psychic journey inward (Ferguson, 228-30).

⁴ For an overview of the Cupid and Psyche myth and how it manifests itself in contemporary fiction see Ferguson, 228-43, 344-47 and Edwards, 143-284.

Chapter V

The Feminine Evolution of Ursula K. Le Guin

Le Guin's development is revealed in the striking departure, despite thematic resemblances, of her more recent works, The Beginning Place and The Compass Rose, from the approach of her earlier books. The myth that characterizes her work has changed from masculine to feminine, from Orpheus to Psyche.

The evocation of the Orpheus myth in Le Guin's work usually accompanies themes of loss, abandonment, death, despair and betrayal. Genly Ai loses and betrays his beloved Estraven and thereby betrays himself. George Orr's dream fever is in response to his aunt's death (his murder of her) and to his apocalyptic vision of the end of the world. Ged's Orphic descent into the Tombs recovers Tenar but this recovery involves Tenar's loss of faith and her subsequent angst. At the same time Ged also betrays Tenar in the sense that he abandons her for the higher purposes of his magery.

The emergence of a strong central female character in Le Guin's work is relatively new and coincides with the manifestation of the Psyche myth. In general these newer mythic works have a central image of the harmonious union of opposites and celebrate women as active, vital creatures, above

all as artists and makers.

The Beginning Place evokes Psyche in its depiction of Irene's successful rite of passage. While Irene and Hugh help each other in their respective ordeals, Irene is clearly more precocious, more the leader. Despite Hugh's bookishness, Irene displays the incipient characteristics of the artist.

In "The New Atlantis," from The Compass Rose, the myth of Cupid and Psyche does not so much evoke feminine development as it suggests the nature of human maturation and Jungian individuation and the nature of creativity. The myth is clearly called up when Belle (Psyche) holds a candle over a sleeping stranger to find that he is her husband Simon (Cupid). Simon responds "'Ah, Psyche! from the regions which are holy land'" (15). The jealous mother of Cupid in this story is the bureaucratic state (a kind of motherland) that, carried to its extreme wishes to keep its citizens dependent children; the state tries to regiment procreation, destroy the possibility of love and deny the existence of the psychic unconscious. The Atlantean chorus in the story suggests the unconscious reality which underlies the narrative. The rising waters, upheavals and eruption of new continents suggest an unconscious irruption centred in the creativity and love of Belle and Simon. The story also suggests, despite the acute suffering of their separations and Simon's torture, Le Guin's peculiar sense of joy and, indeed, provides a happier ending than George Orwell's vision of a totalitarian state in Nineteen Eighty-Four.

Significantly, however, it is Belle, not Simon, who is the artist. While her husband is imprisoned and paralyzed, she goes forth, pregnant and carrying her music, to seek their freedom.

One other story from The Compass Rose deserves comment here: "The Pathways of Desire." While it does not evoke Orpheus or Psyche, the story presents a psychic underworld that is also the maze of desire. It demands as well that the reader accept an Eastern cosmology in which the feminine principle plays a much more active role than in the Judeo-Christian. Ramchandra, one of the three anthropologists in the story calls Tamara "Shakti," which in Hinduism is the creative feminine power of the divine or absolute--the creative power that animates the world ("maya" and "śakti"). Ramchandra also tells the reader that desire creates the world(s) and that as long as we desire, the worlds will endure. He refers to the notion in Indian thought that so-called exterior and objective "reality" is an illusion woven out of what myths describe as the dream of god: "To say that the universe is an illusion (maya) is not to say that it is unreal, it is to say, instead, that it is not what it seems to be, that it is something constantly being made" (O'Flaherty).

Thus there are many levels of desire and many worlds in the story: Bill Kopman's adolescent desire and the naive and uncomplicated desire of the young Ndif, Tamara's desire for Ram, Ram's burning for Tamara, the old Ndif's desire for

meaning, and the anthropologists' desire for language, myth and pattern. If one accepts the Eastern cosmology, it follows that Bill Kopman's desire uncannily sets higher powers--"the God dances"--in motion. Hence the creation of Yirdo. Yet Kopman's utter possession by his adolescent sexual fantasies causes him to ignore the older Ndif and at the same time to release them. Similarly, his relative alienation from his feminine side causes him to overlook the dark Ramchandra and Tamara. (Ram himself points out H. Rider Haggard's rule that all female names end in 'a,' 185). They alone are able to negotiate the pathways or maze of desire on Yirdo or "Ego" and find the monster at its center. They do this by means of dreaming and dancing--the creative activities of the older Ndif. By confronting the monster Bill Kopman, they also recognize the enduring quality of the world they have created between themselves, based as it is in the spirit and love.

In "The Pathways of Desire" Ramchandra and Tamara have equal roles and significantly it is Tamara who visions forth the monster, thereby releasing the lovers from Yirdo and into a brave new world of their own making. In The Lathe of Heaven one encounters the notion that people (George Orr and Dr. Haber) create and are trapped in a partial or limited sense of the world, but only in "The Pathways of Desire" is the feminine nature of this creative energy recognized in the full characterization of Tamara. Heather is a motivating object of desire, found and lost, while Tamara is an active agent in her

own losing and finding.

Orpheus does appear in one of the stories in The Compass Rose, however, but only through a comparatively passing reference. In "The Water is Wide," Gideon, a distinguished physicist, suffers a mental breakdown after the death of his wife Dorothea. The chemotherapy of his doctor does not allow Gideon to grieve, the true extent of his sorrow being perceived as madness. With the help of his sister Anna he escapes from his institutional care and they go to the lake of their family's cottage and of their childhood. There, in the dark, they row on the lake and enter a night of the soul, an underworld of dream and death. But as the story proceeds Gideon and Anna merge to become Gideanna.

Gideanna experiences the full extent of human suffering and witnesses the process of everyone's dying in the drowning images of their friends, colleagues and family. Anna's dead husband, Louis, and the dead Dorothea are among the spectres they meet. Louis comments that he is "no Orpheus" and Dorothea that she is no Lot's wife, who looked back and turned to salt, for they are in danger of losing nothing, being nothing themselves. They do, however, perceive the peril to their living spouses and help them to return. Gideon, the Orpheus-like figure in the story, does not return alone because he did not descend alone. He is they: Gideanna. Having confronted this loss and grief Gideanna knows that the other side of death is the life and love symbolized by the sister. Unlike

Genly Ai, Gideanna acknowledges the androgynous nature of the psyche, the death/life paradox of his existence, and is healed by the dark shamanic experience of the night water.

Despite the fact that Ovid tells us that Orpheus and Eurydice are reunited in the Elysian fields, the overwhelming mood of Orpheus' story is tragic. When Orpheus in his sorrow disavows the company of women (and in some interpretations this is the second time, the first being his breaking of the taboo to look back at Eurydice), he denies the life-affirming feminine principle in himself. As a consequence he brings death at the hands of the vengeful Maenads upon himself. In a Le Guinian sense, he fails unforgivably to return and complete his journey. This rejection of the feminine at this point in Orpheus' story may in part explain Le Guin's eventual preference for the myth of Cupid and Psyche, the ending of whose story always brings reunion and marriage.

Le Guin's evolution, however, can best be demonstrated by a comparison of The Tombs of Atuan and The Beginning Place since both stories involve a central female character. Both stories also recount rites of passage: those of Tenar in The Tombs of Atuan and of both Hugh and Irene in The Beginning Place. In both stories the male and female protagonists must trust and help each other; Hugh carries the sword and Irene speaks, while Ged says: "'You have the knowledge, and I have the skill . . . (The Tombs of Atuan, 114). Tenar has been raised to be a slave to her sacred identity. Conversely Irene

has become a slave to her debased sexual identity. The under-worlds of the tombs and of Tembrea-brezi are where these heroines find security, status and a sense of "immortal life."

Irene must pay for her life in Tembrea-brezi with silence while Tenar must not speak too openly in front of Kossil of her role as mistress to the Nameless Ones. Both Tenar and Irene are in danger of being "eaten" by the underworld. In Irene's case, as stated in the previous chapter, there is the possibility that fear and distrust will make her into a Mrs. Rogers, the dragon's daughter, or that she will be lost in the dreamlike Tembrea-brezi and never return. Tenar in The Tombs of Atuan comes to see the very real danger of her role as "The Eaten One," that she might become the servant of the destructive powers of "The Nameless Ones." Ged tells her that she is in danger of being eaten like Kossil (Lasseter, 102): "' . . . I think they drove your priestess Kossil mad a long time ago; I think she has prowled these caverns as she prowls the labyrinth of her own self and now she cannot see the daylight anymore. She tells you that the Nameless Ones are dead; only a lost soul, lost to truth could believe that'" (107).

Typically the heroism of Tenar and Irene emerges not only in their unflinching descent into the netherworld of their own psyches but principally in their perception that they cannot remain there. Both have their private world violated by a male and yet at the same time they cannot leave this "enemy" or "beast" to die. The awakened sense of responsibility and

love the two young women feel for the stranger (someone other than themselves) strengthens them so that they can "face the anger of the dark." As Ged says: "'Alone, no one wins freedom'" (115).

While the stories are remarkably alike, there are striking differences between the two. A Wizard of Earthsea, the previous book in the Earthsea trilogy, is generally acknowledged as Ged's rite of passage (Walker, 179-91). Immediately, then, a difference in status exists between Ged and Tenar. He acts toward her as a gentle older brother (Molson, 144). He does not take advantage of their intimacy just as he will not call a rabbit to him, only to kill it. The last sentence of the book underscores their difference in knowledge: "Gravely she walked beside him up the white streets of Havnor, holding his hand, like a child coming home" (146). In defining romance and showing how its structure underlies A Wizard of Earthsea, Walker writes: "The hero knows that he needs to accomplish something, though knowledge of the specific accomplishment frequently is denied him until nearly the end of the quest. It can be withheld because the quest is never defined by the hero but always by one of higher status or greater power--the queen in Spenser's Faerie Queene or Bercilack in Gawain (Walker, 188). Ged is the figure of higher status who defines Tenar's quest in The Tombs of Atuan.

The myth evoked by Tenar's initiation, furthermore, is not that of Psyche nor even of Orpheus, but of Theseus

(Esmonde, 21) or Perseus. Theseus braved the labyrinth of King Minos to rescue Athens from oppression while Ged braves the labyrinth initially to find the lost half of the ring of Erreth-Akbe to obtain peace for Earthsea. Theseus succeeds with the help of Ariadne, the king's daughter who gives him weapons and a ball of thread to help him find his way out, while Ged succeeds with the help of "Arha" who often uses a ball of yarn to explore the undertombs. In the story of Theseus, on the way back to Athens, Theseus' ship stops at the island of Naxos. Ariadne is set ashore, either deserted or left momentarily and then tragically separated from her lover. This unhappy conclusion to Ariadne's story, significantly where Ariadne is not in control of her destiny, is recalled by Tenar's feelings of betrayal.

In Perseus's tale, Andromeda is a sacrificial victim offered to appease a sea serpent who is devouring her father's subjects. The oracle prophesies that Andromeda is the only victim who will satisfy the monster. Tenar is chosen through the means of various signs (oracles) to be the priestess of the Nameless Ones but it becomes clear that she is the ultimate sacrifice to these dark powers. She is the one who will be "eaten" while the human sacrifices of the temple ritual are spared and allowed to keep their heads. On his return from his most famous adventure, the killing of the Gorgon Medusa, Perseus first sees Andromeda and instantly loves her. Similarly Ged sees Tenar after his encounter with the dragon of Pendor and

after his shadow fight. He later tells Tenar of their first meeting: "' . . . I have trusted you from the first time I saw your face, for one moment in the cave beneath the Tombs, beautiful in darkness'" (114). Perseus kills the serpent and frees Andromeda while Ged helps Tenar free herself by helping her see the monstrous forces to which she has been made a sacrifice. What is even more clear from these underlying myths, then, is the secondary role of the woman. As Ariadne, Tenar is the helpmate, who no doubt acts against her father's wishes but is not dynamic herself. As Andromeda, she is the passive victim. Tenar is, in fact, like those archetypal princesses (worthy individuals in themselves) who are imprisoned in castles until some young man, brave or clever enough, comes along to free them. On the other hand, Psyche is initially a passive victim but then actively labours to find her love and freedom. Irene, while she is initially trapped by her socialization and unconscious desire and fears, is not guided nor led by her companion. In fact after the dragon's death, she leads Hugh out of Tembreabrezi. Lord Horn is the one who oversees and defines her quest, but he is remote, distant, not a dynamic agent in the story.

The final, notable divergence in the two stories is in their overall preoccupation. The Tombs of Atuan, while it suggests the awakening sexuality of Tenar (Esmonde, 22-27), is centrally concerned with the question: how does one respond to death? Indeed, each of the stories of the Earthsea trilogy

can be said to be a response to death or the shadow (Bittner, 348). Even though Tenar's sexuality is awakened, Tenar's and Ged's love is not consummated except on the symbolic level of their exchange of names and their joining of the ring of Arreth-Akbe.

T.A. Shippey suggests that the overall concern of the trilogy is metaphysical: A Wizard of Earthsea being a discussion of "magic," as a primary force in the universe, The Tombs of Atuan an investigation of the nature of religion, and The Farthest Shore an exploration of what happens when faith in magic or this primary force wanes (147-63). In other words the Earthsea trilogy, and thus The Tombs of Atuan, has deeper philosophical resonance than The Beginning Place.

Shippey also points out that the Kargs of Atuan are more familiar and more like North Americans and Europeans than Ged's people: "They are white, for one thing, while Ged is brown. They are fierce, hierarchic, imperialistic, slave-owning. They have an organized state religion, and indeed an organized state, both unfamiliar in the rest of Earthsea" (155). One can see also that Atuan's "evolution of religious belief from nameless, undifferentiated powers associated with the feminine to celestial and masculine gods" (Crow and Erlich, 205), is similar to that of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The promise that the Kargish religion offers of immortal life as a reward for faith is peculiarly Christian. Esmonde also suggests that the symbolism of apples in the story has a

biblical resonance (22).

Penthe, a skeptical and unwilling novice, offers to or tempts Tenar with apples that Tenar resists. When Tenar leaves with Ged, however, and chooses to leave her safe "garden" with its price of blind obedience, Tenar symbolically chooses the fruit of the tree of knowledge and sexuality. She is accordingly shut out of her garden and loses the possibility of immortal life. Le Guin's allusions to Christian myth here, as in all her work, are iconoclastic.

By contrast the Inner Lands of Earthsea are eastern, the cosmology of "magic" there owing much to Taoism (Bittner, 181, 383). Galbreath explains that Le Guin's affinity to Taoism is philosophical rather than syncretistically religious: "The clearest point of difference--one that is fundamental to Le Guin's work--is the contrast between acceptance of death by the philosophical Taoist as the necessary complement of life and the persistent quest of the religious Taoist for physical immortality through magic, alchemy, hygiene, and the search for the islands of the Immortals. Ged's magery comes to embody as he matures, the principles of philosophical rather than magico-religious Taoism (263).

It is quite a leap then to go from a discussion of one's relationship with God, in particular Tenar's in The Tombs of Atuan, to a discussion of the relationship between the sexes in a demythologized world or where myth exists only in the unconscious psyche (The Beginning Place). I believe,

however, that Le Guin was more deeply involved emotionally in The Tombs of Atuan and thus that the story assumes greater mythological dimensions. This theory is borne out by a comparison of The Tombs with the poem "Coming of Age." The poem is filled with pain and mourning for a lost childhood and a lost faith: "If you will not keep up the world, Lord,/I will" (Wild Angels, 15). At the center of this poem is the loving portrait "Warp and Weft," the poem that Le Guin's mother says was written for Alfred Kroeber and which I discussed in chapter one. The loss of her father (a "central glory") informs the poem, as well as the loss of a dark brother lover mentioned in section II:

And O dark one, dark and bright,
and fleet, fleet-winged, and praised,
not to be held in any cage of love
or use or promises, not to be held
and surely to be lost,
O hunter, brother, gone now, gone!

(11)

I submit that Ged is a conflation of the father/dark brother figure and that Le Guin's decision to separate Tenar and Ged at the end of the story is based upon an incest taboo. Kroeber was in a sense an enlightening influence as Ged was to Tenar; he taught Le Guin to be skeptical of Western Christian assumptions and made her aware of the alternative perceptions

of science, cultural anthropology and Eastern thought.¹ In a sense he made her alien and alone in her own culture: "but I am scared/and sore at having met an enemy,/finding her a neighbor,/my country woman and my like" (Wild Angels, 12). When Ged tells Tenar he will not be able to stay with her because of his calling, we find out in The Farthest Shore that his next adventure will be into the regions of Death, just as the death of Le Guin's father separated the two, leaving her to find her own way, and in a sense released her to be her own person.

On the other hand, just as in "Coming of Age" where the loss of the father is linked with loss of faith, Tenar's grief over the death of her gods, the Nameless Ones, despite their falseness, is also charged with Le Guin's grief at the loss of her father--a god-like presence in her life. The father as god recurs as an ambivalent figure in Le Guin's writing; he brings a "central glory" that when lost, as it inevitably must be, produces an abhorrent vacuum and a terrible entrapment.

Le Guin was, then, closer to her material in the Earthsea trilogy, especially with The Tombs of Atuan, than she is in the later work, The Beginning Place. In addition one can see in both The Left Hand of Darkness and The Tombs of Atuan that Le Guin is playing in her father's intellectual territory with the notion of the Ekumen and in her response to the anthropologist's (specifically, Malinowski's and Frazer's)

view of magic (Shippey, 150). In her more recent books, such as The Beginning Place, The Eye of the Heron (1978), The Compass Rose and Very Far Away from Anywhere Else (1976), Le Guin appears to be wrestling less with anthropological theory, though myth continues to pulse through some of her work. With The Beginning Place, Le Guin is distanced enough to recognize her father as the old man in her unconscious; she has demythologized him.

Le Guin has continued to differentiate herself from her father in her attitudes to the psyche and the unconscious. Her viewpoint in The Left Hand of Darkness and "The Pathways of Desire" reveals that she places, as an artist, a higher value on subjective, unconscious and supernatural experience, whereas Kroeber withdrew from psychoanalysis and a deeper investigation of psychosis to pursue his scientific, empirical studies of cultural patterns and configurations.

In a recent interview Le Guin explains that her father was a Freudian analyst for whom "Jung was a four-letter word." No doubt this explains in part Le Guin's initial reluctance to acknowledge a debt to Jungian psychology. She claims that she read Jung after she had written the Earthsea trilogy and found that Jung "was extremely helpful to me as a shaman or guide at a rather difficult point in my life" (Wickes and Westling, 149). In this connection it is interesting to compare Freud's and Jung's notions of the underworld of dream and of the artist. Freud's understanding of dream was that of a temporary psychosis,

a turning away from the real external world. For Jung dream compensates for the happenings in the daylight world in the interest of individuation. Similarly Freud sees the artist as a neurotic, his art being an expression of his neurosis, while in Jung's conception the artist is more fortunate for he has "plunged into the healing and redeeming depths of the collective psyche, where man is not lost in the isolation of consciousness and its errors and sufferings, but where all men are caught in a common rhythm which allows the individual to communicate his feelings and strivings to mankind as a whole" ("Psychology and Literature," 105).

Kroeber's refusal to see the value of the psychotic experience is rooted in a Freudian pessimism about the redeemability of that experience. His refusal to write poetry himself, though he loved it, is partially explained by the Freudian belief that the artist is neurotic, an infantile personality. On the other hand, Le Guin's attraction to Jung can be understood in the message one receives from all her writing that the psychic underworld is a necessary complement to the daylight world of external, social and material reality. For Le Guin as well it is the artist/figures (George Orr, Ged, Belle, even Irene) who Orphically descend and return, in whom a psychic healing occurs. Certainly Le Guin's own writing appears to have helped her deal with and sublimate "difficult points" in her life--periods of grief, anger and despair.

Le Guin's writing also points out the anthropologist's

or the scientist's limitations in helping one achieve truth or freedom. In the Earthsea trilogy the magery of Ged is obviously more spiritual than the rational humanism of A.L. Kroeber. In The Farthest Shore, Ged risks much more in his shamanic descent. In Le Guin's writing since Earthsea, however, the sense of the anthropologist's/scientist's limitations is made more explicit. In fact scientific discourse in terms of physical and social science is openly satirized in both "The Author of the Acacia Seeds" and "Some Approaches to the Problem of the Shortage of Time."

"The Author of the Acacia Seeds: And Other Extracts from The Journal of the Association of Therolinguistics" is the opening story in The Compass Rose. In her preface, Le Guin places her sense of compass with the aboriginal American peoples, for whom spatial and temporal, material and spiritual dimensions converge. She opposes this compass to that of their dispossessors: "the compass-guided invaders from the East." In this story I suggest that Le Guin is parodying the linguists to argue that they miss the point, their compasses not being grounded in a spiritual center. The fictive authors who sign the first section, for instance, use academic language to distance themselves from the story uncovered in the seeds: "the text seems worthy of interest if only for its striking lack of resemblance to any other Ant texts known to us," "the text certainly permits such a reading" or "We venture to suggest" (1, 5). The second author who announces an expedition to Antarctica is

principally interested in the Emperor Penguin species because its language is translatable into human speech: close analysis and genuine transcribing will at last be possible" (8). The last section, an "Editorial. By the President of the Thero-linguistics Association," suggests the possibility of phyto-linguistics (plant language) or geolinguistics (rock language), fighting off skepticism with the remark: "Remember that so late as the mid-twentieth century, most scientists, and many artists, did not believe that even Dolphin would ever be comprehensible to the human brain--or worth comprehending!" (11).

I would argue that Le Guin is suggesting that the insights of the linguists are not a matter of the evolution of modern science but that primitive cultures and mythic artists have always been sensitive to nature and the Spirit of Place although never attempting to transcribe or analyze its expression into linear "human" speech as these linguists wish to. To the president's questions: "Can we in fact know it [plant language/art]? Can we understand it?" (10, emphasis mine), Le Guin would respond that we cannot know it "in fact." Knowing requires a nonfactual reorientation of our compass to something more closely resembling that of the American Indians.

Of more than passing interest here is the fact that Alfred Kroeber read a paper to the National Academy of Sciences in 1952, entitled "Sign and Symbol in Bee Communications." In it he discusses Von Frisch's study of the language of honey bees, and the possibility of the bee's symbolic communication, generally considered to be an exclusively human faculty. While

Kroeber is open to the notion of bee language, he concludes: "More evidence, especially experiment may confirm or reverse it. Von Frisch has opened a brilliant and promising path with bees. By comparison, ants eat more varied foods, wage wars, plant so-called gardens, raise or at any rate cherish livestock, are divided into castes Whether communication techniques of these other orders and suborders of insects are genuinely or pseudo-symbolic, they will no doubt be of extreme interest and significance when more fully and exactly known" (757). One can see here an antecedent for Le Guin's fictional linguistics, but one can also see that her subtle response to her father would resemble her response to the therolinguists: you are working with the wrong compass--European, anthropomorphic, linear, binary rather than with the Compass Rose of the New World.

In a similar vein "Some Approaches to the Problem of The Shortage of Time" from The Compass Rose is concerned with empirical, physical, material, political, intellectual models of time. This understanding of time epitomizes the problem underlying the ideals of the European, masculine culture which Le Guin writes about in her paper on utopias, "A Non-Euclidean View of California as a Cold Place to Be":

The purer, the more euclidean the reason that builds a utopia, the greater is its self-destructive capacity. I submit that our lack

of faith in the benevolence of reason as the controlling power is well founded. We must test and trust our reason, but to have faith in it is to elevate it to godhead. Zeus the creator takes over. Unruly Titans are sent to the salt mines, and inconvenient Prometheus to the reservation. Earth itself comes to be the wart on the walls of Eden. The rationalist utopia is a power trip. It is a monotheocracy, declared by executive decree, and maintained by willpower; as its premise is progress, not process, it has no habitable present and speaks only in the future tense. And in the end reason itself must reject it (168, emphasis mine).

Le Guin argues that her civilization would do well to learn from "cold cultures" such as that of the California Indians whose ideals were more anarchic, inscrutable and more feminine. In this essay there is an implied criticism of her father who of course wrote a major reference book on Californian Indians. She quotes him in his observation that the California Indians refused to make maps, claimed themselves incapable (178), while Kroeber himself did not hesitate to make such maps.

While the father is still an important figure in Le Guin's fiction, still someone deeply admired and whose approval counts for much, he is someone who must be left behind and not looked back at for guidance. He becomes someone whose

limitations her female characters must acknowledge. In The Eye of the Heron Luz is a young woman who must change her life by rebelling against and leaving her father. An older woman explains Luz's father to her: "'He's a King, a real one Well, I mean he's strong of soul, he has grandeur of heart. But when a man is shut up inside walls that he's been building stronger and higher all his life, then maybe no strength is enough. He can't get out'" (73). Here Luz ("light," Lucifer) is a Romantic Prometheus challenging a patriarchal world and going with her people to a new land.

Le Guin's shift from masculine to feminine myth in her work represents a release from her obsession with the father and his influence, and the creation of herself as an artist. Moreover, her attacks upon the Judeo-Christian tradition represent her break with patriarchal cosmology and culture. For Le Guin Eve's disobedience is an act of independence and freedom.

Endnotes

¹ In a recent interview Le Guin remarked that her attraction to Taoism began with her father: "My father's favourite book was a copy of Lao Tzu, and seeing it in his hands a lot, I as a kid got interested I got into that pretty young, and obviously found something that I wanted, and it got very deep into me" (Wickes and Westling, 149).

Conclusion

It is evident from Le Guin's writing that she was influenced and moved by her father's ideas, investigations and intellectual shortcomings. Moreover among Kroeber's family Ursula is not alone in displaying this preoccupation, for Karl Kroeber's academic career in Native American literature and Theodora's published writings also testify to Kroeber's influence.

Two motifs in particular are reflected in Le Guin's mythic writings: the anthropologist or envoy and his relationship to a primitive or "backward" culture and the inward, psychic journey whereby the hero comes to terms with death or loss and creates/heals (and therefore renews) him- or herself.

The mythic character of Orpheus which is evoked in both The Left Hand of Darkness and The Lathe of Heaven intensifies our awareness of failure and loss in both these books. Genly Ai is an Orpheus whose Apollonian/Dionysian tension is overbalanced to the Apollonian. Thus, Genly Ai is also Orpheus as failed artist; he fails to integrate the Gethenian sources into his own narrative and he fails to accept truths that his imagination reveals to him in the foretelling vision. His severed head does not go on singing; he cannot affirm the Orphic power of song to overcome death.

Dr. Haber similarly is a failed artist/shaman figure especially as juxtaposed with George Orr, the true shaman and the Orpheus who succeeds in singing beyond death.

In as much as Genly Ai's role and actions on Gethen resemble those of an anthropologist's, in as much as Haber's role is that of a dream therapist and social scientist and in as much as both Ai and Haber represent Kroeber's ideas (the oikemenê and one world culture), the imaginative origin of these characters can be traced to Alfred Kroeber. One can say as well that Le Guin's heroic male characters Estraven, Orr and Ged in some respects mirror her father's values but with this crucial difference: they have a spiritual connection to their world that Alfred Kroeber could appreciate but could not share. These heroes owe much more to primitive or Indian models than they do to Le Guin's father.

Le Guin, then presents the anthropologist and the social scientist as a paradigm of failure in both an artistic and a personal sense. Genly Ai and Haber fail as artists because of their purposefully alienated stance against the primitive, unconscious, feminine and thus spiritual side of themselves. In "betraying" and manipulating their friends they betray the side of their own natures that their exotic or primitive friends represent. Le Guin does not express such distrust of the pure scientist, witness her treatment of physicists: Simon in "The New Atlantis" and Shevek in The Dispossessed. She portrays them, however, as working at a

supra rational level of thought, beyond the constraints of language and binary logic. Their creativity is artistic.

The father figure/male hero recedes in importance in Le Guin's more recent fiction as women characters become more central to her stories and take on the role of artist or maker. In a sense she has written her father out of her system. He is acknowledged to be as dead as the Lord of the Mountain in The Beginning Place. In "The Pathways of Desire" he is the other anthropologist--the "golden Bob"--an impossible paragon of masculinity and rational achievement, who must be sacrificed to the new cosmology, or in The Eye of the Heron the father figure, Boss Falco, is someone whose limitations are discussed quite openly.

Heralding this development is the change of the predominant myth in her work from Orpheus/Apollo to Psyche, the overall mood of her mythic writing changing from one of loss to one of integration, wholeness, even joy symbolized by true marriage or androgynous union.

It seems to have been necessary for Le Guin to exorcize her father's ideas and biases from her imagination in order to begin exploring new territory herself. She says that she does not wish to be a luddite and that we must trust and test our reason ("A Non-Euclidean View . . .," 177, 168), reflecting the fact that she had fully to understand the mistakes of the old world and its rationalist, utopian ideals before she could create and enter a new one.

The last story of The Compass Rose, "Sur: A Summary Report of the Yelcho Expedition to the Antarctic, 1909-1910," is an account of a secret expedition of South American women to reach the South Pole. The women are successful in their endeavour to reach the pole and do so before Amundsen's expedition, but significantly the speaker makes it clear from the first sentence that she has no intention of publishing the report. It is a family record which will remain hidden for her grandchildren and thus for when the world changes enough to accept its revelation. The compass point for this story is "south" and the point of the story is both antipodean and subversive, for it points to what lies below recorded history. In the same way that the lost record of the Indian peoples lies below the textbooks of California history that Le Guin read as a child, the stories and exploits of women are buried beneath the traditional masculine voices of the historical record.

In "Sur" Le Guin metaphorically suggests that there are other ways of telling history: myth, legend, shamanistic vision. It is interesting to note that Kroeber, as well as considering shamanism a backward phenomenon, observed that where "shamanism forms a much less important part of religion as a whole . . . the majority of the shamans, and those supposed to be most powerful, are women" ("The Religion," 329). Kroeber could have been writing about his own culture and the less important status accorded to women's roles in it. This bias and Kroeber's bias against the shamanistic experience,

are ones that Le Guin had to wrestle with in order to become an artist. Despite the love and respect Le Guin felt for the man and father, Alfred Kroeber becomes a symbol of the patriarchal cosmology, history, and culture which Le Guin has had to reject. In so doing she is able to recreate the world as she does in "Sur" and she is able to choose a new role for herself as artist, that of shaman and world renewer.

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