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Araştırma makalesi/Research article

Defiance of Patriarchy in LeGuin's The Left Hand of Darkness

Le Guin'in Karanlığın Sol Eli Romanında Ataerkiye Meydan Okuma

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Abstract

Patriarchy can succinctly be defined as, to say the least, an oppressive frame of mind operating on the principle of dualities to ordain, maintain, and consolidate the absolute superiority of masculinity. Patriarchy's 'essential(ist)' emphasis is predicated on a blatant heterosexist conviction decreeing the austere segregation of human species as female and male assigned to an unalterable as well as unchallengeable sexual orientation. This imposed sexual edict involves heterosexuality in the novel's context and relevant gender roles issuing from this 'officially acknowledged and approved' heterosexuality.

This paper argues that in her science-fiction novel The Left Hand of Darkness (1969) Ursula Le Guin subverts the dualism of an obsessed, stringent, and simultaneously 'stagnant swamp' patriarchy as she delineates a mode of

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existence where rigid female-male duality is wiped out through the introduction of alterable sexes. This non-essentialist, or rather to be more precise, anti-essentialist 'essential' argument deftly displayed and handled in the novel convincingly demonstrates that patriarchy along with its relevant attributes and attitudes directly emanating from it focuses on the indoctrination and resigned internalization of heterosexual female-male dichotomy.

Keywords: *Le Guin, utopia, feminism, subversion of gender, patriarchy, dualism*

Öz

En hafif ifadeyle ataerki, erkeksi olanın mutlak üstünlüğünü öngören, bunu sağlayıp sağlamlaştırmayı amaçlayan baskıcı bir düşünce yapısıdır. Burada degil belki, ama mutlaka bir sekilde ataerki kavramina, edebiyatta kullanimina temel bir kac kaynaktan referans vermek gerekecek. Ataerki, katı bir kadın-erkek karşıtlığı üzerinde hareket eder. Ataerkinin omurgasını oluşturan özcü vurgu göze batacak şekilde heteroseksist bir düsturu temel almaktadır. Bu düstur, insan türünün değişemez ve sorgulanamaz biçimde keskin bir kadın-erkek ikililiğine ayrılmasını öngörür. Öngörülen bu kadın-erkek ayrımı baştan içselleştirilmesi beklenen, 'resmi olarak onaylanıp olumlanan' biricik cinsel yönelim olan heteroseksüelliğe dayanmaktadır.

İşte Ursula Le Guin, ilk kez 1969 yılında yayımlanmış olan bilim-kurgu türündeki Karanlığın Sol Eli romanında ikili karşıtlık takıntısı olan, katı ve aynı zamanda da durağan olan ataerkiye adeta meydan okumaktadır.

Bunu, ataerkinin olmazsa olmaz özelliklerinden olan cinsiyet temelli değişmezliği ortadan kaldırarak başarmaktadır. Le Guin'in özcülük karşıtı savının 'öz'ünü işte bu durağan olmayan, değişebilir cinsiyet rolleri oluşturmaktadır. Romanda ustaca sergilenip işlenen bu sav; ataerkinin, ataerkiyle ilgili özelliklerin ya da doğrudan ataerkiden kaynaklanan tutumların, baştan heteroseksüel olduğu varsayılan kadın-erkek karşıtlığının dayatılmasına ve içselleştirilmesine dayandığını ikna edici biçimde göstermektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Le Guin, ütopya, feminizm, cinsiyet, ataerki, düalizm*

Introduction

The enticing charm of the main argument intricately and deftly woven by Le Guin throughout her science-fiction novel *The Left Hand of Darkness* consists in her praiseworthy encouragement of her audience to contemplate on the basic foundations of inherently 'spoilt' state of humanity. In this respect, Le Guin unbolts humanity's ontologically unfair state off its hinges both at a physical and cognitive levels as this iniquitous state rests on a taken-for-granted internalized commitment or rather surrender to deterministic, offensively gendered, 'stagnant' heterosexual role patterns.

This austerely imposed arrangement of sexuality requires human beings to conform to gender role patterns ascribed to two sexes labelled as the stronger one (male) and the weaker one (female) as it is coerced upon them by piercing, penetrating, heterosexually conditioned frame-of-mind.

This patriarchal disposition is prepossessed with the maintenance of progress-oriented linear development in order to ensure the sustenance of a clear-cut arranged social framework steadfastly operating on the principles of sexism, essentialism, and the worship of austere masculinity. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines patriarchy as "a system of society or government ruled by men" (Eds. Soanes & Stevenson, 2004: 1050). As can be inferred from the emphasis on the execution of authority in this basic definition, patriarchy's ultimate end can be identified as the absolute political control exerted by the male/masculine party: "The women's liberation movement in Europe and North America insisted that sexuality was a political, and not merely a personal, matter" (Ed. Freedman, 2007: 311). I prefer to extend the scope of patriarchy in a manner to cover any frame of mind, attitude or practice leading or contributing to the oppression of any non-male/non-masculine party. In this respect, what Le Guin highlights in *The Left Hand of Darkness* is the crucial role associable with heteronormativity (i.e. taken-for-granted sanctioning of heterosexuality as the only admissible sexual orientation) in the seizure and practice of executive social and political power by patriarchy.

The Left Hand of Darkness is an exemplary novel epitomizing Le Guin's non-masculine, non-linear, non-development-obsessed, and non-duality-oriented stance that merits enjoying a laudably unique status in science-fiction genre as well as utopian writing. In her novel Le Guin neatly, mildly, but at the same time resolutely, endeavours to inculcate her audience with an awareness concerning the incorrigible 'rottenness' entrenched in 'stinking', overtly sexist, aggression-prompting, dissociating, alienating, oppressive patriarchal disposition. This overbearingly androcentric mindset rests on the exacerbation of dualisms to perpetuate its sovereignty. Le Guin conjures away this corrupt male-dominant 'order of things' by introducing a utopian realm where masculinity, linearity, overwhelming progress-orientedness, and dualism as essential attributes of 'Earthly' existence fade into oblivion and are supplanted by androgyny/femininity, cyclicality, process-orientedness, and wholeness, respectively.

This article aims to explore, what it identifies as, the defiance of patriarchy as well as its close ally which is gender-oriented essentialism in Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Although the primary text of this article discusses Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*, it does not solely focus on secondary works specifically written about this novel. Instead, through intertextual references, this article endeavours to elaborate on the cultural aspect of patriarchal ontology and its repercussions.

Defiance of patriarchy

As I've indicated above, gender issue towers as Le Guin's chief concern in *The Left Hand of Darkness***.** She gathers around it all other relevant aspects constituting the core of the Gethenian civilization as they are moulded into shape throughout the novel. She achieves this through a detailed depiction of an imaginary society (Gethenians) emancipated from the cumbersome engrossment of a sharply-chiseled dichotomy among human beings on the essentialist basis of gender roles which cleaves them into two separate halves: the so-called stronger sex (male) and the so-called weaker sex (female). Consequently, this segregation of human beings compels them to conform to conventionally affirmed behavioural stereotypes ascribed to these sexes via the indoctrination of linear, development-obsessed, progress-oriented, androcentric Apollonian mindset. In this respect, Le Guin strives to inculcate her audience with an awareness as to the internalized prevalence of stinking injustice 'essentially' emanating from the enforcement of gender dichotomy to the detriment of whole humanity. As appropriately noted by Polish scholar Marek Oziewiecz, utopian genre functions as a medium of reformulating the concept of (in)justice which asserts itself as a prevalent topic in Le Guin's writing. In "A War Without End" Le Guin draws on her concern focusing on (in)justice issue by hinting at the thought-provoking, horizon-enhancing role of imagination peculiar to utopian genre in stimulating the reader to wake up to the reality of injustice and lack of liberty in a vacuum-like, 'sterile' state of hollowness featured by blissful ignorance: "We will not know our own injustice if we cannot imagine justice. We will not be free if we do not imagine freedom" (Le Guin, 2004: 220). As pointed out by Oziewiecz, Le Guin does not conceptualize justice merely as a trite term regulating the relationship between state organization and individuals, but as a reference point which arranges circumstances stipulating the style of life led by individuals, in order to accord with Amartya Sen's perception of justice as articulated in *The Idea of Justice*: "Justice is ultimately connected with the way people's lives go, and not merely with the nature of the institutions surrounding them" (Sen, 2009: x). Arguably Le Guin's visible interest in gender-based (in)justice topic primarily springs from her righteous desire to eliminate linear, avaricous, progress-oriented, patriarchal, oppressive Apollonian frame-of-mind and supplant it with a "non-European, non-euclidean, non-masculinist", cyclical one foregrounding an affirmatively poignant antisexist sensitivity as well as a tangible notion of process-orientedness rather than progress-orientedness in which the vanity of hero-worship accompanied by masculine pride is emphatically underlined. In "Dancing Gracefully But Cautiously: Ursula Le Guin's Criticism" Joan Gordon lends voice to Le Guin's reasonable complaint about utopian genre's prepossession with the goal of reinstituting an optimal habitat on the basis of *Yang*ward, linear development-obsessedness: " 'It seems', she says, 'that the utopian imagination is trapped, like capitalism and industrialism and the human population, in a one-way future consisting only of growth'" (Gordon, 1990: 117). In *Der Gott des Grotesken* Nevzat Kaya points out essential attributes of the Apollonian

mindset which enables the maintenance, consolidation, and stratification of patriarchy in which "justice serves to the preservation of power of the stronger as well as the 'sanctity' of marriage (in which) wife and children are possessions of man" (My Translation) as in the following:

> "Offspring belongs to the tribe of father (masculine succession) . . . Children remain in the role of father . . . Disobedience to father (as) the worst guilt . . . Obedience to authority and masculine law . . . Dualistic . . . Linear . . . Monotheistic with a masculine god, fighting against other religions, Absolutistic . . . God (as) absolute sovereign" (My Translation)."

The ideal substitute adumbrated by Le Guin in lieu of this disturbingly Apollonian *Yang*wardness is the prioritization of *Yin*wardness to enable the obtainment of a balance between these two poles by means of diluting the encroachment of masculinity, i.e. *Yang*wardness, clemently in order to attain a state of cognitive and moral justice on the basis of androgyny peacefully, though thoroughly, infiltrating the society so as to assure the fair distribution of authority as well as justice among its female and male members that would accord with the Far-Eastern "Yin-Yang point of view which maintains that masculine and feminine concepts should enjoy an equal status as they are necessary at an equal level and one without the other would be meaningless" (My Translation). However, to Le Guin, in order to maintain a state of satisfying balance between *yang* and *yin*, a genuine display of sensitivity and priority to *yin*wardness which has mostly been overlooked in conventional, progress-oriented utopian writing over centuries is a prerequisite, as is also underlined by Joan Gordon: "Where Utopia has been traditionally yang, she says, let us imagine an inward, 'yinward', ideal: 'dark, wet, obscure, weak, yielding, passive, participatory, circular, cyclical, peaceful, nurturant, retreating, contracting, and cold' " (Gordon, 1990: 118).

In accordance with Le Guin's conceptualization of true justice predicated on a conviction in Yin-Yang principle of balance as most distinctly illustrated in Genly Ai's assessment of Estraven as a concrete embodiment of Yin-Yang concept on behalf of the Gethenian society in the statement "Light, dark. Fear, courage. Cold, warmth. Female, male. It is yourself, Therem. Both and one. A shadow on snow." (Le Guin, 1997: 225) - as discussed in the paragraph above - in order to eliminate inequality between genders -as far as possible- that emanates from an oppressive, peremptory, essentialist Apollonian stance at the fountainhead of which lurks a ruthless, heterosexist, masculine authority impudently trampling on individuals' right to voluntarily assume social role patterns of their own choice through an essentialist imposition; *The Left Hand of Darkness* can be reckoned as a radiant manifesto declaring Le Guin's mild, though unflinching, criticism of social and indeed, in a wider sense, ontological injustice preying on the confirmation and further exacerbation of dichotomies - at the bottom of which undeniably lies gender - to enable the perpetuation of its existence. The revolutionary streak of Le Guin's basic argument, foregrounding the elimination of dichotomies which are primarily

entrenched in gender-oriented essentialist duality, consists in her striving to efface the notion of otherness that she regards as the fomenter of hostility as rooted in covetousness for power: "In her (Le Guin's) view, 'the only possible relationship' we could have with an 'other' is 'a power relationship' and not an ethical one" (Burns, 2004: 141). In this respect, Le Guin endeavours to stimulate her audience to wake up to the awareness of 'inherent foulness' pervading human existence which resides in a strict, irreconcilable bifurcation of sexes – as the stronger one and the weaker one – operating on the indoctrination that males and females are expected to conform to gender-role-patterns imposed on them. Thereby, she inspires her audience to stride over the boundaries of the conjecturable, envisage the unimaginable, and thus acquire an awareness about the 'rottenness' swathing her/his existence: "As an experiment in imagination, she attempts to express the inexpressible, to challenge readers' way of thinking about gender. According to Le Guin, she created the Gethens as a 'heuristic device, a thought experiment' " (Pennington, 2000: 352).

The Gethenian society delineated by Le Guin in her novel is primarily distinguished from that of Terra on the grounds of an utter absence of strictly-divided sexes where being completely male or female is conceived of as a physiological and sexual perversity which arouses disdain. Thus, as one can readily argue, Le Guin draws her audience's attention to the aberration of austere separation of sexes as the weaker and the stronger one on Earth which is taken-for-grantedly internalized by masses as though it were a normality we need to adhere to and not dare question its appropriateness as the only acceptable form of human existence. "The society of Gethen, (which) in its daily functioning and its continuity, is without sex" (Le Guin, 1997: 84) is fairly justifiably described as one purged of major sources of trouble tormenting Terrans -from which hostility and the loss of bliss spring from- like Oedipus/Electra Complex, sexuality-based violence, and dualism fostering gender discrimination in order to serve to the justification of inequality between sexes:

> "Consider: A child has no psycho-sexual relationship to his mother and father. There is no myth of Oedipus on Winter.
>
> Consider: There is no unconsenting sex, no rape.
>
> Consider: There is no division of humanity into strong and weak halves, protective/protected, dominant/submissive, owner/chattel, active/passive. In fact the whole tendency to dualism that pervades human thinking may be found to be lessened, or changed, on Winter. . . . Our entire pattern of socio-sexual interaction is nonexistent here. They cannot play the game. They do not see one another as men or women" (Le Guin, 1997: 85).

As can be inferred from the quotation above, the lack of clear-cut heterosexual genders paves the way for the elimination of sexual repression and frustration on Gethen since there does not exist an overbearing heterosexist voice authorized to dictate individuals austerely to stick to the assumption of a certain type of sexual orientation due to the absence of stable - let alone merely gender patterns - but also sexual roles:

> "Being so strictly defined and limited by nature, the sexual urge of Gethenians is really not much interfered with by society: there is less coding, channelling, and repressing of sex there than in any bisexual society I know of. Abstinence is entirely voluntary; indulgence is entirely acceptable. Sexual fear and sexual frustration are both extremely rare" (Le Guin, 1997: 153).

Then it comes as no surprise that Genly Ai is gripped by a pungent notion of alienation due to the absence of unalterably predetermined heterosexual partner roles on Gethen in quite an evocative way so as to correspond to the sense of estrangement nagging at young Pakistani men who - under the sway of intrusive religious fundamentalism - feel alienated from women as they consider them (women) "mysterious, unknown, desirable and yet threatening creatures of almost another species, whom you had to respect, marry and impregnate but couldn't be friends with" (Kureishi, 1996: 89).

> "A friend. What is a friend, in a world where any friend may be a lover at a new phase of the moon? Not I, locked in my virility: no friend to Therem Harth (Estraven), or any other of his race. Neither man, nor woman, neither and both, cyclic, lunar, metamorphosing under the hand's touch, changelings in the human cradle, they were no flesh of mine, no friends; no love between us" (Le Guin, 1997: 182).

The paragraph given above portraying Genly Ai's perturbation emanating from a palpable sense of alienation he is confronted with on Gethen is exceedingly meaningful in terms of disclosing the psychological anatomy of Terrans - on behalf of Genly Ai - who are incorrigibly conditioned to reflect on with reference to dualities and predestined stock gender role patterns they are supposed to succumb to. In this respect, as an average male inhabitant of Terra who confesses his imprisonment "in my virility", Genly Ai cannot help being repulsed by the lack of static - and indeed 'stagnant' - gender roles on Gethen in which human beings are tightly stuck throughout their lives on Terra. Accordingly, Genly Ai's description of his existence as one "locked in my virility" bears exceeding significance since it reveals the blinding, stultifying influence exerted by masculine urge of puissance on Terran men who are irretrievably stipulated to think and behave with reference to attributes of masculine existence the image of which they feel compelled to live up to. Definitely, Genly Ai is gripped by this notion of masculine cognitive pertinacity during his journey with Estraven across Orgoreyn as he ruminates over the impossibility of reckoning a Gethenian as a friend who "may be a lover at a new phase of the moon". In a broader sense it can be asserted that what confounds Genly Ai consists in the view of constructivist, dynamic, altering gender roles regulating the practice of sexual activity on Gethen which poses a stark contrast to the essentialist perception of gender roles to which he is 'acclimatized' on Terra. Consequently, he cannot adapt himself to the idea of shifting sexual-partnership-roles as it shatters his duality-obsessed conviction regarding sex and gender.

Another highly notable conclusion that can be derived from Genly Ai's reflections is his reluctance to abandon making considerations without the boundaries of overbearing framework of Apollonian heterosexism the main attributes of which are linearity and stability. As can be inferred from his contemplations, as a Terran man incurably accustomed to thinking with reference to these Apollonian attributes; Genly Ai is revolted by cyclicality and dynamism - namely, potentiality to undergo metamorphosis - which correspond to the conventional realm of femininity and androgyny. It is self-evident that *kemmer* (i.e. the brief monthly period of sexual alertness - succeeding a lengthier period of *somer* during which Gethenians lapse into a state of sexual inertia and thus can be denoted as asexual - at which Gethenians are grasped by a vigourous sexual urge, get involved in sexual intercourse, and accordingly adopt partner roles either as women or men at the end of each month covering for 4-5 days) follows a cyclical lunar time pattern rather than a linear solar one which evokes the idea of menstruation peculiar to women as an indicative characteristic of women's innate inclination towards pursuing a cyclical time pattern apparently in harmony with nature. This 'natural' routine poses a blatant contrast with men's dissemination of sperms which can occur at any time of month or day without the slightest tinge of a tendency to follow a cyclical time pattern. As a typical representative of Apollonian masculinity peculiar to Terra, Genly Ai's subconscious strife with what is cyclical and therefore harmonious with nature, can convincingly be perceived as a projection of an inclusive, umbrella-conflict waged like a fierce war between culture and nature. These two concepts are conventionally associated with masculinity and femininity respectively almost since man's acquiring awareness regarding the cruciality of his role in reproduction process. In her highly thought-provoking, influential work *Sexual Personae* in which she expatiates on the relationship between nature, culture, and gender; Camille Paglia plainly points out woman's identification with nature: "Nature's cycles are woman's cycles. Biologic femaleness is a sequence of circular returns, beginning and ending at the same point. Woman's centrality gives her a stability of identity. She does not have to become but only to be" (Paglia, 2001: 9). In stark contrast with woman, man who is traditionally identified with culture gets involved in an irreconcilable struggle with nature-as-woman in order to suppress and 'cultivate' it. Thus, as conventionally propounded, man strives to construct culture by enabling the submission of nature and woman which can actually be treated as a reflection of man's unquenchable ambition for *tour de force* that springs from masculine virility and pride. In *Natur-Literatur-Kultur* Nevzat Kaya concisely highlights man's innate urge to establish authority over nature and woman:

> "It is conspicuous that here cultural construction of nature amounts to a coherence of nature and femininity because anthropocentric claim to power spans over nature and this takes place not only in the sense that nature is compelled into submission but also it runs parallel to the substitution of woman by science and technology (My Translation)" .

Considered under the light of Kaya's argument above, the deficiency of a strong will for rapid scientific development as well as the prevalence of a relative technological retardedness on Gethen as observed by Genly Ai, as a Terran man prepossessed with rapid linear development at the expense of the submission as well as exploitation of nature, can be evaluated as an expected outcome of Gethenians' innate disposition as androgynous or rather, to be more precise, anti-heterosexist beings without unchanging, 'stagnant' gender roles. Check English. Namely, Gethenians' inclination towards being in congruity with nature manifests itself palpably in their lack of eagerness for rapid, linear technological development since being in coherence with nature requires process-orientedness rather than progress-orientedness. Accordingly, despite some indications of a tendency towards progress-orientedness in Orgoreyn in relation to Karhide- as rather negligible in comparison to Terra-, one can contend that process-orientedness asserts itself as a dominant characteristic on Gethen by posing a stark contrast with excessive progress-orientedness of Terra.

Some other affirmative outcomes that emanate from the absence of clear-cut gender dichotomy and utter lack of a heterosexist discourse engrossing on individuals can be listed as the absence of militarism and nationalism engendered by a relentlessly intrusive patriarchal mindset which are actually nothing except displays of masculine virility and manly pride that are actually missing expressions on Gethen as epitomized in Estraven's disposition: "He (Estraven), after all, had no standards of manliness, of virility, to complicate his pride" (Le Guin, 1997: 187) On Gethen the closest expression that can be employed to equate Terran manly pride is *shifgrethor*, which roughly corresponds to a Gethenian's behavioural trait or instinct for preserving its self-esteem by avoiding a sense of embarrassment in its relationship with other Gethenians. Nevertheless, even *shifgrethor* can hardly be equated with Terran manly pride for the simple reason that there are no 'genuine' men in Terran terms both physiologically and psychologically on Gethen where "one is respected and judged only as a human being" (Le Guin, 1997: 86). Accordingly, although there may be some singular, exceptional physical strifes and scuffles which can amount to some relatively minor rehearsals of a battle in Terran terms, one can hardly come up with any convincing trace proving the existence of a full-fledged war on Gethen where the rate of armament - particularly in comparison to Terra – is meagre. In this respect, Tibe's desire to incite Karhideans into action by kindling the spark of war as a medium of mobilizing them can be deemed as an uncommon behaviour that can hardly be claimed to exert a palpable influence on the Gethenian folk. To express it succinctly, the lack of dualities leads to the elimination of war, too. The absence of ascribing any plausible justification to war which features the Gethenian mindset is most precisely encapsulated in Estraven's following statement condemning war as starkly inimical to civilization that must be avoided: ". . . primitiveness and civilization are degrees of the same thing. If civilization has an opposite, it is war" (Le Guin, 1997: 91).

The absence of militarism goes smoothly hand in hand with the lack of notion of nationalism on Gethen as distinctly exemplified in Estraven's remark dismissing nationalism as a repulsive, hostility-provoking concept: "What is love of one's country; is it hate of one's uncountry? Then it's not a good thing" (Le Guin, 1997: 181). As clearly outlined in this statement, Estraven as a Gethenian finds the notion of hostile duality embedded in nationalism detestable. Expectedly, Estraven's repulsion by the idea of nationalism is despised by Genly Ai as an average Terran accustomed to thinking with reference to dualities as he condemns Estraven's negatory assessment of nationalism as suggestive of its bereavement of the ability to conceive in abstract terms marked out by feminine compliance in a sexist manner: "There was in this attitude something feminine, a refusal of the abstract, the ideal, a submissiveness to the given, which rather displeased me" (Le Guin, 1997: 181-182).

Le Guin's denial of gender-based dualisms and the absence of clear-cutly chiselled heterosexual gender roles as key arguments constituting the gist of the Gethenian frame of mind -with a few singular exceptions that are not penetrating enough to refute it- as has been explored up to now converge at the encompassing abstractness diffused by the terms uncertainty and wholeness - standing for "change-in-the-form, transformation, ambiguity, metamorphosis" (My Translation) - which Genly Ai is not able to grasp at all as indicated in his wrongful judgement above about the absence of abstractness or rather abstraction on Gethen. In the novel the notion of uncertainty; most conspicuously communicated through the absence of clear-cut, stock sexual-partnership/gender roles; asserts itself as a central concept which "makes life possible" as emphasized by Faxe the Weaver: "The only thing that makes life possible is permanent, intolerable uncertainty: not knowing what comes next" (Le Guin, 1997: 66). The idea of uncertainty highlighting the sexual behaviour of individuals on Gethen is closely interlinked with the idea of wholeness - which "tries to restore theories, opinions and tenets split up into countless numbers of atoms in Apollonian manner to its 'original entirety' " (My Translation) - characterizing the clement, passivity-oriented Handdara religion without a regulating supreme instution, clergy, and set body of laws. In this respect, Handdara stands in stark contrast with dualism-oriented, sexism-provoking, monotheistic religions of Terra consolidating the reign of abhorrent patriarchy and aggressive alertness: " 'Well, in the Handdara . . . you know, there's no theory, no dogma. . . . Maybe they are less aware of the gap between men and beasts, being more occupied with the likenesses, the links, the whole of which living things are a part" (Le Guin, 1997: 199). Genly Ai articulates this stark contrast between wholeness and dualism ardently featuring Gethen and Terra respectively in his following remark: "Perhaps you are obsessed with wholeness as we are with dualism" (Le Guin, 1997: 199). The topic in which the principle of wholeness arguably manifests itself most concretely is the method for the rearing of children which operates on an arguably communist principle foregrounding the assertion that the whole society rather than the heterosexual parent-couple is responsible for the bringing up, tending and edification of children: "A quarter to a third of the adult urban population is engaged full time in

the nurture and education of the children. Here the clan looked after its own; nobody and everybody was responsible for them" (Le Guin, 1997: 89).

Conclusion

As is meant to be discussed and illustrated in this article, *The Left Hand of Darkness* as an exemplary novel epitomizing Le Guin's non-masculine, non-linear, non-development-obsessed, and non-duality-oriented stance merits enjoying a laudably unique status in science-fiction as well as utopian genre since she neatly, mildly, but at the same time resolutely, endeavours to inculcate her audience with an awareness concerning the incorrigible 'rottenness' entrenched in 'stinking', overtly sexist, aggression-prompting, dissociating, alienating, oppressive patriarchal mindset resting on the exacerbation of dualisms to perpetuate its detestable sovereignity by introducing a hardly conjecturable, inexpressible utopian realm where masculinity, linearity, overwhelming progress-orientedness, and duality as essential attributes of our Earth fade into oblivion and are supplanted by androgyny, cyclicality, process-orientedness, and wholeness respectively. Indeed, should one be expected to come up with a catchphrase to suit the main argument Le Guin communicates throughout her novel, the vanity of patriarchy would be a plausible suggestion. Then, a question would arise of its own accord: Of all epithets associable with patriarchy as represented in the novel, why vanity? For the simple reason that a major contingency vanity involves is the adoption of pretension for the sake of 'acquisition'. And what is the objective meant to be acquired, or to be more precise usurped, by patriarchy? The privilege for exertion of authority over the non-masculine. Relevantly; as illustrated in the novel and further outlined through accompanying references made to the cultural ontology of patriarchy in this article; whenever and wherever there is no stability in sexual identities, patriarchy's bid for the subjugation of the non-masculine on the basis of imposed gender roles is inconceivable- let alone be blatantly insolent.

Endnotes

1 "Recht dient dem Schutz der Macht des Starken, der 'Heiligkeit' der Ehe (in der) Frau und Kind sind Besitz des Mannes" (Kaya, 2000: 21).

2 "Nachkommen gehören zur Sippe des Vaters (männliche Erbfolge) . . . Kinder bleiben am Ort des Vaters. .. Ungehorsam(keit) gegen den Vater (als die) schwerste Schuld . . . Gehorsamkeit gegenüber Autorität und männlichem Gesetz . . . Dualistisch . . . Linear . . . Monotheistisch mit einem männlichen Gott, Bekämpfung anderer Religionen, absolutistisch . . . Gott (als) absoluter Herrscher" (Kaya, 2000: 21).

3 "Yin-Yang-Anschauung, die besagt, dass das männliche und weibliche Prinzip gleichberechtigt und gleich 'nötig' sind, dass Eines ohne das Andere sinnlos ist" (Kaya, 2000: 51).

4 "Es ist unübersehbar, dass hier das kulturelle Konstrukt von Natur auf eine Kongruenz von Natur und Weiblichkeit hinausläuft, denn der anthropozentrische Machtanspruch erstreckt sich über die Natur and das nicht nur im Sinne ihrer Unterwerfung, sie verläuft parallel zu der Ersetzung der Frau durch Wissen und Technik" (Kaya, 2005:16).

5 "Formveränderung, Verwandlung, Uneindeutigkeit, Metamorphose" (Kaya, 2000: 15).

6 "versucht, die in apollonischer Manier in unzählige Atome aufgespaltenen Theorien, Ansichten und Lehrsätze zu dem 'ursprünglichen Ganzen' zurückzuführen" (Kaya, 2000: 5).

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