Being in a mythic world

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Being in a mythic world

by

Robert J. Smith

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INTRODUCTION

Always Coming Home, by Ursula K. Le Guin, is an unusual novel that at once relaxes, disturbs, and intrigues the reader. The reasons why are not easy to find; but I started with the assumption that Always Coming Home utilizes an authentic discourse, what I call "authentic feminine discourse" to emphasize the feminist slant on what it means to write outside patriarchal conventions as an authentic individual. This is not to be taken as an exhaustive study, nor as some kind of metanarrative that attempts to re-create the text in terms of this limited thesis. Even the claim of unification through feminine discourse is a purely synthetic construct on my part, though Le Guin would probably agree that this analysis is relevant to her project.

An authentic feminine discourse is necessary for women to express themselves in appropriate and adequate terms. It is difficult for women to change the traditional masculist practices because it is still difficult for feminists to get approval to use their work to teach students about alternate ways of thinking about gender. The ruling masculist paradigm approves the textbooks. Continuing to write about women from within the current patriarchal paradigm continues the popular images of women conforming to subservient roles, doing domestic things, and running about hysterically.

According to Ursula Le Guin, life-long social conditioning
blurs original thought and hides the hopeful possibilities for the future; the language of power relations reinforces the expectations and stereotypes of marginalized feminine behavior. We condition ourselves, Le Guin continues, according to the dictates of the "Corporate Capitalist Democracy" and censor everything that does not contribute to the accumulation of Capital, including feminine discourse. The censor, as a reified manifestation of our communal conditioning, pays for what it wants and does not pay for what it does not want, and so fashion controls the market for the fine arts, education, and sex roles: "sensationalism is in; thinking is out" (Le Guin Language 214).

Chris Weedon agrees with Le Guin's claims and writes that Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis help maintain the power of the status quo when used as the basis for analysis of books or film (148-9). "To practice literary criticism is to produce readings that fix the text's meanings temporarily in order to privilege certain political interests," writes Weedon (138). Literary critics, then, produce meaning, power, and implications for existing social institutions; and at times there are several discourses in competition for power and acceptance. 6,000 years of male domination has formed our currently accepted images, metaphors, and hierarchy of values. Consequently, the language that has evolved is also a masculine rendition of
acceptable feminine metaphors. As a result of this adumbration, women are sometimes unable to describe female behavior or psychic states in appropriate or adequate terms. Caroline Whitbeck agrees with this assessment, writing that authentic feminine discourse requires freedom from the kind of value-laden terminology that depends on "masculist presuppositions of ontology" (59). This means that authors like Laura Mulvey, Juliet Mitchell, and Nancy Chodorow, who use psychoanalytic theory that employs masculist jargon, are unlikely to create anything but a response to or collaboration with patriarchal power, regardless of the insights gained from their work. Whitbeck continues by suggesting that feminine corollaries to masculine psychoanalytic models are only reactions which will at best yield a female version of an inherently masculine model and will still fail to express uniquely feminine perspectives (59). According to Chris Weedon, what we need is a good female-centered language and more woman-centered criticism for women to be able to express themselves as women (151-4).

In order to write an authentic feminine discourse one must use caution not merely to react against the existing system of masculine language, for a reaction against an idea yields an opposition, still bound to the original, rather than yielding an authentic response. One may invent new language, rediscover old language from an un-corrupt source,
or co-opt and re-define a hostile language by subversion. In *Always Coming Home*, Le Guin uses a newly invented language, complete with new letters, new numbers, and new phonetics which she places in the "Back of the Book." She uses archetypal images, a potentially un-corrupt source, to guide the form of her myths. Le Guin also subverts and co-opts some of the most important metaphors of the patriarchy, reversing their meanings in order to illuminate the benefits of matriarchy like peace, stability, and conservation, and to expose the negative consequences of patriarchy, like war, slavery, and chemical pollution.

In Chapter I we will look at Le Guin's basic approach to writing, the structure of *Always Coming Home*, a plot summary of the main narrative, translations of some Kesh metaphors, and how these metaphors work to subvert the patriarchal status quo. In Chapter II we will look at Le Guin's use of an ancient source which, according to Karl Jung, exists in people's minds as (pre-patriarchal) archetypal images; specifically, we will see how some of the myths in *Always Coming Home* repeat Jung's archetypal images. In Chapter III we will drive home the necessity for a new mode of discourse and a new way of being in the world.
CHAPTER I

In this chapter we will first examine the organization of *Always Coming Home* and Le Guin's revolutionary approach to writing fiction. Next, we will look at some generative metaphors from the "Back of the Book" as Le Guin uses them in the main narrative. Finally we will glimpse what is required for authentic feminine discourse.

The Killer Story

Ursula K. Le Guin writes, in "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction," that contemporary American readers are caught up in a version of the "Killer Story." This story arose from a myth invented by our Indo-European ancestors and, according to Elinor W. Gadon in *The Once and Future Goddess*, by 500 B.C.E. was incorporated into our culture as a necessary condition of life: believe or die (113). Le Guin explains that before people learned the Killer Story 65%-80% of what primitive people ate was

- seeds, roots, sprouts, shoots, leaves, nuts, berries, fruits, and grains, adding bugs and mollusks and netting or snaring birds, fish, rats, rabbits, and other
tuskless small fry to up the protein (Le Guin "Carrier"
1).

Le Guin explains that all this gathering and foraging took only about fifteen hours a week. They had a lot of spare
time; so, according to Le Guin, the men got together and decided to go out hunting mammoths for fun, returning with ivory, a lot of meat, and a story to tell, about how they killed the mammoth. Mammoth hunting stories were much more exciting than stories about gathering grain to eat, and so these kinds of stories became a cultural symbol of the virility of men: the Killer Story (Le Guin "Carrier" 2). The socialized ideal of the heroic killer not only changed our eating habits, but also justified the notion that men are inherently superior to women because they are more powerful killers.

We now know that the Killer Story Le Guin describes is a more recent invention than she suspects. In The Chalice and the Blade, Riane Eisler writes that instead of killing mammoths for fun, nomadic tribes swept across Old Europe, killing and enslaving the peaceful population that had lived there for centuries:

By the fifth millennium B.C.E., or about seven thousand years ago, we begin to find evidence of what Mellaart calls a pattern of disruption of the old Neolithic cultures in the Near East.... In Old Europe the physical and cultural disruption of the Neolithic societies that worshipped the Goddess also seems to begin in the fifth millennium B.C.E., with what Gimbutas calls Kurgan Wave Number One. "Thanks to the growing
number of radiocarbon dates, it is now possible to trace several migratory waves of steppe pastoralists or 'Kurgan' people that swept across prehistoric Europe," reports Gimbutas. These repeated incursions and ensuing culture shocks and population shifts were concentrated in three major thrusts: Wave No. 1, at c. 4300-4200 B.C.E.; Wave No. 2, c. 3400-3200 B.C.E.; and Wave No. 3, c. 3000-2800 B.C.E. (dates are calibrated to dendrochronology).

The Kurgans were of what scholars call Indo-European or Aryan language-speaking stock, a type that was in modern times to be idealized by Nietzsche and then Hitler as the only pure European race. In fact, they were not the original Europeans, as they swarmed down on that continent from the Asiatic and the European northeast (44).

The Indo-Europeans, as we shall call them, fit Eisler's model of the Dominator type (xvii). Individual status among people using the Dominator model is based on rank; and the dominator culture is based on aggressive conquest and domination through mass murder and terror.

Le Guin's Killer Story, which is quite similar to Eisler's Dominator model, celebrates a hero who kills, conquers, or otherwise defeats his enemy. Le Guin writes that literary conventions, established by the power of an
entrenched patriarchy, are based on this killer metaphor; they insure that stories will be written this way:

So, the Hero has decreed through his mouthpieces, the Lawgivers, first, that the proper shape of the narrative is that of the arrow or spear, starting here and going straight there and THONK! hitting its mark (which drops dead); second, that the central concern of the narrative, including the novel, is conflict; and third, that the story isn't any good if he isn't in it (Le Guin "Carrier" 7).

Though Le Guin only alludes to the Dominator model, Elinor Gadon writes an excellent account of some of the latest archeological discoveries to support Le Guin's theory. According to Gadon, there were actually two ancient cultures, one peace-loving and in tune with its world; but the other was an aggressive dominator race, the Indo-Europeans, who sent waves of invaders crashing over the older culture almost drowning out the peaceful race.

The social system that ultimately evolved in the lands conquered by the Indo-Europeans was based on a system of dominance that mirrored the interpersonal relationships in their pantheon. We are only now becoming aware that patriarchy has become so embedded in our belief system that we accept its premises as natural and inevitable (Gadon 111).
The Killer Story myth still persists today in a variety of forms. It still makes an exciting story because we expect it to be exciting; we are reflexively socialized to want it because the myth is central to our culture.

Le Guin contests the Killer Story's claim to power by citing *Woman's Creation* by Elizabeth Fisher, who writes that the first cultural invention was almost certainly not the spear or club, but a container of some sort used to carry the day's gather back home. If true, then the Killer Story's claim, that it is the first principle upon which culture should be based, is false. Le Guin explains that the basket metaphor is better suited to novel-writing than the spear-form because a book is a kind of container, not a spear. A novel holds all kinds of words, which in turn hold the meaning of things, like a sack or a bag. All the words in a novel are associated so as to "bear meaning." A novel based on the basket metaphor is also more versatile and can be non-reductive. It can trace a trajectory without being the trajectory; a novel can contain a conflict without being reduced to the conflict; a novel can have a hero without being merely a hero's story. There is room in the carrier bag for all kinds of things.

Consistent with her Carrier-Bag theory, Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* is a prime example of a basket book that holds different kinds of interesting things in relation to
other things by virtue of their presence in the same (con)text. The success of the novel hinges on not naming the relations except in a vague way, like Lao Tzu's not naming of Tao in the *Tao Te Ching* (Wilhelm 68). The name is for convenience only and in no way is the thing reducible to the definition. By telling stories, Le Guin is able to imply that relationships exist between the stories without actually issuing utterances of their existence. To equate meaning with utterances is to lead away from the meaning of relationships by reducing and limiting understanding to the utterances. The implied relation between things marks the synthetic nature of all continuity in this novel, and also in life. *Always Coming Home* is a going between of stories, or a going between different ways that are not necessarily oppositions. This "going between" is a central image of the novel, called the "heyiya." Heyiya, in the Kesh language of the novel, means: "sacred, holy or important thing, place, time, or event; connection; spiral, gyre, or helix; hinge; center; change" (Le Guin ACH 552). Le Guin's dependence on heyiya, a word fabricated especially for this occasion, reflects the essential discontinuity of the novel. Discontinuity exists except where people impose synthetic relations and interpretations. *Always Coming Home*, a book that is organized like a carrier bag and not like a spear, requires the reader to become an active interpreter, one who
creates continuity out of an essentially discontinuous world as it is recorded in stories by different subjects.

The content of Always Coming Home is also unusual. "Stone Telling," the main narrative, appears in three sections and makes up about 20% of the novel. The three sections of "Stone Telling" are embedded within a series of shorter sections that contain poems, formal recitations, life stories, histories of events, myths and legends, explanatory narratives, and direct authorial addresses by Pandora, who is usually worried about what she is doing. Each of these sections contributes to the reader's understanding of the main narrative, and also contributes to the remaining sections, so for the active reader this deceptively simple "Stone Telling" mushrooms into a complex web of meaning by the end. The narrator introduces each section and explains difficulties, repeatedly reminding the reader that these stories must be understood within the context of the Kesh culture. Formidible difficulties may arise in the accumulation of stories because the culture we are about to explore utilizes unfamiliar metaphors, emphasizes different values, and reverses much that we would think of as "common sense." The short stories and other selections contained in Always Coming Home define or explain these metaphors within the web of Kesh culture that gives "Stone Telling" meaning; but, as a whole, the text
constitutes a radical departure from the more common style of narrative fiction spawned by the Killer Story.

In another unusual move Le Guin treats the entire project as an archeological dig, by starting in the present and digging into the future; and one never knows what will pop out of a dig site, especially when digging into the future. But how can one practice archeology on a future culture? This is fantasy/fiction, after all; as Le Guin explains in "Towards an Archeology of the Future": "All kinds of seeing with the mind's eye is allowed me here" (ACH 4). As archeologist/narrator/translator, Le Guin's mind's eye sees all. The seemingly contradictory subject, the study of people who do not yet exist, tends to disorient the reader, tends to unsettle his or her preconcieved notions of time, space, and order to prepare the reader for Le Guin's own system. Even archaeologists know very little about primitive cultures because only bones, pottery and a few other broken bits remain. Le Guin asks what we know about the Romans who lived around three thousand years ago, who left ruins, buildings, bones, and coins scattered all over Europe? What do we know in comparison about the "first-comers," the native Americans who also lived three thousand years ago, but who left only obsidian chips to mark their passing? (Le Guin ACH 4).
In *Worlds Within Women*, Thelma Shinn writes:

In the imaginings of fantastic literature we can dissolve what might be artificial barriers between us and what is indeed knowable. From another vantage point in space and/or time, we not only gain perspective on what is and what was but also open new perspectives on what can be and might have been (150).

Only time travelers can know the people who lived three thousand years ago. Though analyzing artifacts yields volumes of information about some ancient cultures, only certain kinds of information are verifiable. For the most part the available information will not support speculations on the daily lives of ancient people. So speculating about people who might live 3,000 years in the future involves little more guesswork than speculating about those who lived in the distant past, especially people who did not leave behind many artifacts, like the ancient native Americans.

With too little evidence to reconstruct the lives of these ancient Americans, Le Guin suggests the only archeology that might be practical:

You take your child or grandchild in your arms, or borrow a young baby, not a year old yet, and go down into the wild oats in the field below the barn. Stand under the oak on the last slope of the hill, facing the creek. Stand quietly. Perhaps the baby will see
something, or hear a voice, or speak to somebody there, somebody from home (ACH 5).

To find future worlds we must imagine. Here time represents the two arms of a spiral, the heyiya, that extend into the past and the future; only the synthetic present is real, here, now, the center hinge in between. Le Guin asks, "Which is farther from us, farther out of reach, more silent--the dead or the unborn?" (ACH 4). Both are a fantasy of the imagination.

Le Guin's narrative style is also unusual. Le Guin presents herself as the translator for the written and oral literature of the Kesh people that appears in Always Coming Home, addressing the reader directly to introduce most of the selections. Translators do not simply translate words; they translate to preserve the perceived intent and the meanings of the original. Le Guin translates the ideology of an opposing, future paradigm into words and ideas that readers in the current patriarchal paradigm can comprehend, an idea we will explore more fully in Chapter II. Le Guin introduces the players and quietly explains the situations in terms of our value-laden understanding; she translates the subjective testimonies of characters too, but occasionally Le Guin addresses the reader through a mythic commentator named Pandora. Pandora discusses key points; she explains how to unlock and open the text: how to open
"Prometheus' box," how to lose the evil images of shadow into the world. But she also gives us the hope of the classical tale, and gives us time to know our hope. Pandora acts as an intermediary between Le Guin's fantasy world and the reader's "real" world; indeed, the entire novel is full of intermediaries between oppositions, or Ways, as the Kesh say.

Rather than writing about a planet from an objective view, consistent with the preponderance of fiction writing that echoes the Killer Story, Le Guin, speaking through Pandora, comments on the pattern:

PANDORA Doesn't WANT to look into the big end of the telescope and see, jewel-bright, distinct, tiny, and entire, the Valley. She shuts her eyes, she doesn't want to see, she knows what she will see: Everything Under Control. The dolls' house. The dolls' country.

Pandora rushes out of the observatory with her eyes shut, grabbing, grabbing with her hands.

What does she get, besides cut hands? Bits, chunks, fragments Shards. Pieces of the Valley, lifesize. Not at a distance, but in the hand, to be felt and held and heard. Not intellectual, but mental. Not spiritual, but heavy (ACH 56).

Any attempt to capture the world within a single text is necessarily reductive. In order to avoid the reductionism
of the Killer Story, Le Guin writes what Pandora acts out. She closes her eyes to some "objective," omnipotent viewpoint in favor of writing from the inside, from the subjectivity of the characters who inhabit her fantasy. What Pandora grabs, Le Guin writes. So the text takes on, apart from some of Pandora's commentary, a fragmentary aspect. She concentrates on pockets of relevance, separated by the essential discontinuities of the real world, and not on trying to bring the world under the sway of her novel. The text holds stories about people in a world that always point to something other than that which is written. Any world, according to Le Guin, contains things that are not related to each other, but are necessary elements of a whole that cannot be characterized in terms of a story line ("Carrier" 7). There is no objective world attempted in Always Coming Home, only stories, contexts, and relationships determined by different subjects.

Le Guin's open-ended approach utilizes the reader's mind, insisting it interact with the text, insisting it re-create the world according to fragments of the future dug out of her mind, translated for the reader, preserved in the text.

Seven Generative Metaphors

Le Guin introduces her archeology of the future, always pointing to the fact it is a fantasy; then she presents her
vision of life in the Valley through the longest of the life stories, that of Stone Telling, who begins her history as a little girl going on her first journey. This immediately establishes life in the valley as the norm in this future world and sets up sympathy for the Kesh and their way of life, making the antagonists seem alien and evil by comparison. Stone Telling writes her story to describe her experiences living with the Condor people. She is the only person ever to return to the Na Valley from the Condor city, providing the only testimony describing the Condor culture. In the end the Condor culture destroys itself, and at that time it becomes clear that the Condor represents Le Guin's rendition of the extinction of Elinor Gadon's Dominator model. Stone Telling, being partly Kesh and partly Condor, is a hinge who contains in herself the continuity of two divergent systems. She is the central mediating character in *Always Coming Home*, and as such she represents the relationship between our world and the world of the Kesh, represents the relationship between the Kesh and their shadows, and also represents the relationship between ourselves and our own shadows. By telling her story, she illuminates both ways in terms of the other as spirals of the same heyia. She also chooses, and her choice becomes our moral dilemma.
Let us now turn our attention to some of the actual language in *Always Coming Home* both by means of plot summary and by reference to the seven generative metaphors that Le Guin supplies in "The Back of the Book."

"Stone Telling" is not only the title of the central narrative of *Always Coming Home* but is also a name of the person telling it. "Stone Telling," written in first person as if by Stone Telling, is divided into three parts, roughly corresponding to her life's paths. In the Na Valley, it is customary for people to choose different names for the different stages of their lives. Her first name, given by her mother, was North Owl; her second name, given by her father, was Ayatyu, which means high-born woman; her third name, chosen for herself, was Woman Coming Home; her last name, as we have said, was Stone Telling, because she sits like a stone and tells her story.

Stone Telling is of the Blue Clay House. According to the "Serpentine Codex," there are nine houses. The five Houses of earth (Obsidian, Blue Clay, Serpentine, Yellow Adobe, and Red Adobe) contain the beings called Earth People, among whom are the earth itself, the moon, fresh water springs, streams and lakes, all live human beings, game and domestic animals, and plants that are used by humans (Le Guin *ACH* 45). The four Houses of the sky (Rain, Cloud, Wind, and Still Air) contain the beings called Sky
People, among whom include "the sun and stars, the oceans, the wild animals not hunted as game, all animals, plants, and persons considered as the species rather than as an individual,... all people and beings in dreams, visions, and stories, most kinds of birds, the dead, and the unborn" (Le Guin ACH 46). All things that exist are said to be in a house. The word House is widely used as a generative metaphor to describe where people belong:

The Metaphor: THE HOUSE.

What it generates: STABILITY.

Universe as house: Rooms in one Mansion.

Society as household: Division within unity; inclusion/exclusion.

Person as householder: Selfhood.

Medicine as protection.

Mind as householder: Belonging.

Language as self-domestication.

The relationship of human with other beings in the house: Inside/Outside.

Images of the House: Doors, windows, hearth, home, the town. (Le Guin ACH 521).

On a practical level, The House functions as a matrilineal totem, associated with growing, gathering, or hunting certain plants and animals that humans need to survive, associated with dividing responsibilities for the annual
festivals, and associated with maintaining lodges, societies, and arts. The House also categorizes the different people of the world, remembering that "people" means everything from rocks to dead children. The House is a purely synthetic human construct, imposing an illusion of order on the universe, creating a continuity between the diverse living and non-living people on the planet, perpetuating a feeling of oneness that keeps the human people psychologically linked to the rest of the world. Some of the myths we will be discussing in Chapter II explain this more completely. The House metaphor categorizes inhabitants of the Houses, called The Animals:

The Metaphor: THE ANIMAL.
What it Generates: LIFE.

Universe as animal: Organic, indivisible wholeness.
Society as animal: Tribe, clan, family.
Person as animal: Kinship.

Medicine as rest.
Mind as animal: Discovery.

Language as relationship.

The relationship of humans with other beings as animals:
Eating. Interdependence.

Images of the animal: Birth, mating, dying, the seasons, the tree, the diverse beasts and plants.

(Le Guin ACH 519-20).
Combined, these two generative metaphors yield a powerful system of interdependence held together by the unity of human imagination. Diverse species exist in different Houses or rooms of the same mansion; humans imagine that all species are dependent on all others for their existence, either directly or indirectly, thus forming the continuity of the Kesh zeitgeist. All people belong by virtue of being Animals and being in a House, and are all inextricably connected to each other and to the world through dependent necessity.

North Owl grew up in a poor family in Sinshan, a town in the Na Valley. Her family, consisting of North Owl, her mother, Willow, and grandmother, Valiant, lived in a house named High Porch house. They were poor because they could not contribute to the community as much as they took. A wealthy family would contribute food, clothing, or services like healing, writing, drawing, singing, acting, and making pottery or music to the community. Wealth was measured in terms of how much a family contributed. There was no stigma attached to being poor and people took any assistance they needed gracefully, without shame.

North Owl's father, Kills, commanded a scouting party of 25 soldiers, sent by the Condor to find new land to conquer. None of the valley people suspected invasion when the scouting party arrived because war, fighting, and
killing were thought to be symptoms of a disease: the disease of Man, an unacceptable kind of behavior tolerated only in adolescents. North Owl made Willow into a mother after Kills returned to the land of the Condor. North Owl grew as any normal child living in the Na Valley, except that some of the other children called her half-House and referred to her as half a person because her father came from outside the Valley.

When North Owl was eight, in her clearwater years, she walked for the first time on the mountain. Her grandmother prepared her for the walk. For nine days North Owl ate no meat, and for the last four she ate raw food and drank water only once a day. Then before dawn she left:

So I went on up across the high hills, walking while it was still dark, running when it began to be light, and I was on the high ridge of Sinshan Mountain when the earth's curve and the sun's curve parted. I saw light fall on the southeast side of all things, and the darkness turn away across the sea (Le Guin ACH 20).

North Owl spent the entire day looking for a good place to sleep that night, looking for a place to hide. She was afraid of wild animals. All alone on the cold mountain that night she confronted her unconscious fears, finding that the real reason for her walk on the mountain was to show the other children that she was not half a person, that she was
better than them all, brave and holy. The next day she spoke to all the people she met and was not afraid. After four days she returned, dirty and hungry; and she knew she had grown but did not know how or why.

One year later, her father returned with 300 warriors who encamped for the winter, and North Owl and her father met for the first time. Some of the Kesh thought that the Condor had returned to have a war. North Owl listened to some of the men talk about this. Some thought that if the Kesh refused to fight, gave the Condor warriors whatever they wanted, and asked them to go away that there would be no trouble:

Mouse Dance, who was then speaker of my heyimas, said, "They can do us no harm. We walk the gyre."

Hound said, "And they the wheel, and the power builds!"

"Keep to the gyre," Mouse Dance said (Le Guin ACH 26).

Walking means to follow a path or way. Walking the gyre refers to a generative metaphor called The Way, while walking the wheel refers to The Machine metaphor. The comparison of these two metaphors is instrumental in understanding both of these cultures. The people of the Condor use The Machine.

The Metaphor: THE MACHINE.
What it Generates: WORK.

Universe as machine: Clock and clockmaker. Running and running down.

Society as machine: Parts, functions, cogs; interrelations; production.

Person as machine: Use. Function.

Medicine as repair

Mind as machine: Information.

Language as communication.

The relationship on humans with other beings as machine: Exploitation.

Images of the machine: Progress, ineluctability, breakdown, the wheel (Le Guin ACH 520).

In place of the machine, the Kesh use The Way.

The Metaphor: THE WAY.

What it Generates: CHANGE.

Universe as the way: Mystery; balance in movement.

Society as the way: Imitation of the non-human; inaction.

Person as wayfarer: Caution.

Medicine as keeping in balance.

Mind as wayfarer: Spontaneity. Sureness.

Language as inadequate.

The relationship on humans with other beings on the way: Unity.
Images of the the way: Balance, reversal, journey, return (Le Guin ACH 521).

Faced with the imminent invasion of the warriors, the Kesh had few alternatives. Keeping to the gyre suggests the principle of non-action, a fluid response to the invasion, rather than a show of resistance. If the Kesh were to resist, the Condor's machine would crush them. The community provided the 300 troops across the river with whatever provisions they asked for and stayed out of their way.

North Owl adored her father, partly because she never had a father before, and liked to ride with him on his horse while he gave orders to his troops. It was a well-oiled machine. She felt her father's power of command and became drunk with its allure. She thought that Kills was the only intelligent man among the command because the other men kept slapping their foreheads or falling down to look at his toes whenever they approached him. But Kills did not read or write, sing or dance, or do any useful work while he was in the Na Valley, except once when he helped build a heyimas, a community house. When people saw how well he could work they wondered why he did so little, but the pride of his command prevented him from working at "menial" jobs.

In the spring the Condor recalled the army to fight a battle, and Willow divorced Kills because he chose not to
stay. Kills told North Owl that he would return if he survived, but Willow would not speak to him, returned to her childhood name, and withdrew into herself. North Owl, being young, thought Willow had sent her father away and would not forgive her; North Owl decided to wait for her father to return: "My loyalty to him made my difference from other people a virtue, and gave unhappiness both a reason and a term" (Le Guin ACH 183).

There was much discord in the Valley after the Condor troops left, and much of part two of "Stone Telling" deals with the illness that the Condor left behind: the sickness of Man. The Valley people finally realized that the Condor planned a full-scale invasion. Many men joined the warrior lodge and many women joined the lamb lodge, a woman's corollary to the warrior, in order to prepare for the war that many people expected. The women who joined the lamb lodge did not learn the warrior rites, but were taught that the only way for a woman to understand the mysteries of warfare was to love, obey, sacrifice, and serve a warrior who did understand them.

When she was 14, North Owl fell in love with a young warrior who took the name Spear (the only time she was ever in love) and joined the lamb lodge: "he might as well call himself Big Penis and be done with it," she thought (Le Guin ACH 186). North Owl advanced quickly, and as part of a
ritual sacrifice she was required to leave the sacrificed animal's blood on her arms and hands until the next day as proof of the killing. Her mother refused to let her eat dinner until after she washed her hands; North Owl was furious and ran from the house but then saw her father, who had survived another five years of fighting. She left with Kills the next morning to become a "Condor Woman," and Kills gave her the name Ayatyu.

The Condor, as the valley people called them, called themselves the Dayao, meaning the One People. They had a strict hierarchical society. Their god, One, was an immortal person who was all-powerful and made everything out of nothing. One was not the universe: he made it, standing outside it, commanding it. He was worshipped above everything else. The One reflected himself in the Condor, who was next in the hierarchy, the most perfect reflection. The Condor was also obeyed and worshipped. The True Condor were the people of the Condor's family line and were reflections of the reflections of One. True Condor were not worshipped, but were obeyed on penalty of death. The One Warriors were warriors, called sons of Condor, and were also reflections of reflections of One. The Tyon were farmers and shepherds who were a very dim, faint reflection of One, but were still at least human. The Tyon represented the bulk of the population, who were allowed to work for pay.
The Hontik were all others: savages and animals, who were sub-human, created by One to serve and obey the human beings. The Hontik were killed and captured, forced to work as slaves. Some day, according to the Dayao, One will "un-make everything" except the True Condors; and they will become a part of One, living forever in eternal bliss.

The Metaphor: THE L ORD.

What it generates: POWER.

Universe as kingdom: Hierarchy from one god down.

Order from chaos.

Society as kingdom: Hierarchy from one king down.

Order from chaos.

Person as lord/subject: Class, caste, place, responsibility.

Medicine as power.


Language as power.

The relationship of human with other beings in the kingdom: Superiority.

Images of the Kingdom: The pyramid, the city, the sun.

(Le Guin *ACH* 519).

Stone Telling thinks this religion is nonsense and writes:

True Condor warriors were to be one thing only, reflections of One, setting themselves apart from all the rest of existence, washing it from their minds and
souls, killing the world, so that they could remain perfectly pure. That is why my father is called Kills. He lives outside the world, killing it, to show the glory of One (Le Guin ACH 213-4).

The Dayao were a nomadic tribe before the Condor commanded them to build a city that One pointed to "with a finger of light." The illness of the Dayao people lies in their refusal to accept the reality of the world; as a consequence they believe the world exists only for their use. They wage war on all worldly existence.

Any militaristic hierarchy, like the Dayao, freely uses this related metaphor:

The Metaphor: THE WAR.
What it generates: STRUGGLE.

Universe as war: The triumph of being over nothingness.

The battlefield.

Society as war: The subjugation of weak to strong.

Person as warrior: Courage; the hero.

Medicine as victory over death.

Mind as warrior: Conquistador.

Language as control.

The relationship of human with other beings in war:

Enmity.

Images of war: Victory, Defeat, loot, ruin, the army.

(Le Guin ACH 519).
This Dayao way of life was totally alien to the Kesh people, and Stone Telling comments in frustration that she must tell the story in terms of reversal words. "What to us is disaster to them is glory" (Le Guin ACH 203).

The Dayao were an extremely oppressive culture. They forbade anyone to read or write except members of the True Condor, and anyone caught trying to read or write lost either an eye or a hand. The women were kept inside almost all the time, in the most interior part of the house, in order to protect them from raids (Le Guin ACH 209); but there were never any raids. Dayao women learned nothing except for simple household chores and sewing, and there was always a hierarchy. Even if two people were working together one always was in charge so that working was like making War. Dayao women had no souls so it was useless for the men to try to teach them spirituality. Later, Stone Telling writes: "There is no way that men could make women into slaves and dependents if they did not choose to be so. I hated the Dayao men for always giving orders, but the women were more hateful for taking them" (Le Guin ACH 377). The Dayao men killed and burned all men and children that they conquered, but they captured the women and kept them penned with the cattle. Any Dayao man could have as many wives or women as he wanted, and many men had one wife to bear children and another "pretty wife" who was kept for
pleasure. Ayatyu was given to a Dayao man and was kept as a pretty wife. She had one girl child.

Even Dayao men were strictly limited in their activities. To them knowledge was power, and knowledge was strictly limited. Access to the exchange, a terminal to the City of Mind computer net, was restricted to the Condor and a few advisors. The power of command was also limited, and since the Condor commanded obedience and worship, everybody told him that he could do anything he wanted to do. This led the Condor to believe himself to be invincible; only he kept losing battles and his farmers and shepherds kept running away, so that during Ayatyu's stay there was less and less food. The Condor built a tank and some airplanes to fight with because his warriors kept losing. The production of hardware and fuel took most of the labor, materials, grain, and vegetables. The women and many others thought they should move to a new place where food was more plentiful, and for once some of the men listened. But, as Stone Telling recalls: "Since the Dayao didn't talk things over in public council, as people usually do, there was no way for disagreement to come together into agreement. So ideas became opinions and these made factions, which diverged and became fixed oppositions" (Le Guin ACH 374). The Condor began to execute those who held wrong opinions, and Ayatyu saw "Black vultures stooping to tear at their own
bellies, pulling out their own entrails and eating them" (Le Guin ACH 375). The Dayao were in a state of war with everything on the planet, including themselves. After the "executions" began Ayatyu, with the help of her father, escaped with her child and a friend. On the way home she changed her name to Woman Coming Home.

She was 22 when she returned to High Porch house in the Na Valley. Her mother was shriveled up and old-looking; she had wasted herself on anger and self-pity. "That is the danger of going backwards in the way she had done when she took back her child-name. She had not Gyred, but had closed the circle" (Le Guin ACH 388). The grandmother, Valiant, was dead. Woman Coming Home decided she wanted to become rich and started to work the garden plot again and weave at her grandmother's loom. She learned the Deer Gyre song, a song of importance. When she was 26 she "came inland" (had sex with) a physician who was 40; eventually they got married and danced the dance of life.

The Dance is another powerful metaphor in Always Coming Home that expresses the continuity of human experience.

The Metaphor: THE DANCE.

What it Generates: MUSIC.

Universe as dance Harmony. Creation/destruction.

Society as dance: Participation.

Person as dancer: Cooperation.
Medicine as art.
Mind as dancer: Rhythm, measure.
Language as connection.
The relationship on humans with other beings as dance:
Horizontal linkings.
Images of the Dance: Steps, gestures, continuity, harmony, the spiral. (Le Guin ACH 520).

In the last few pages of part three of "Stone Telling," Le Guin, the universal translator, intrudes to tell about the end of the Dayao people via some messages sent over the exchanges, a world-wide computer net maintained by the City of Mind. She also writes about the cure for the illness that the Dayao spread all over the land. The Dayao people did finally die out from internal conflict. They failed to conquer the world using the technology available through the exchange because there was no technological infrastructure capable of supporting a technological military. But why they failed is really the wrong question. The question should be: "Why did they want to kill and conquer at all?"
Le Guin answers this question:
To this I think the people of the valley might have an answer, along the lines of "Very sick people tend to die of their sickness," or "Destruction destroys itself." This answer, however, involves a reversal from our point of view. What we call strength it calls sickness; what
we call success it calls death (Le Guin ACH 405).

This is the key to showing that Le Guin believes that our society has the same Dominator mentality as the Dayao. We can be described by the same metaphors; we use them freely. The implication is that our own society may also destroy itself from inner conflict, and may eventually give rise to another, more authentic way of life, exemplified by the Kesh. This more authentic way of life is not based on a Dominator model like the Killer Story, using The Machine, The Lord, and The War, like the Dayao; but it is based on a Partnership model, using The Dance, The Way, The Animal, and The House, representing Le Guin's Carrier Basket.

Le Guin also asks if long term genetic adaptation resulting from our industrial waste will ultimately restore a balance to the nature of human beings. Low birth rates, congenital disease, and short life expectancies may turn out to be good for the human race in the long-run. Pandora's "hope" gives a new meaning to social Darwinism. Natural selection might ultimately change the human animal's social habits to include a way for people to live well without the need to kill and dominate each other, and without waging War on the earth. The sickness of Man might continue to plague humans in different forms forever, like a mutating virus; but maybe future humans can learn to control this primal social disease. Maybe we can learn to think of the world
according to The Way, maybe this Way will determine who dies and who lives to reproduce, thereby cleansing society and the gene pool of the sickness of Man. But Le Guin's metaphors also have meaning for our current society.

Le Guin's generative metaphors identify categories of human experience that our masculist culture has marginalized, and breath life into the Kesh culture by using these categories as the controlling metaphors that generate meaning. With previously marginal ideas brought to the fore, the categories of human experience that are central to our masculist culture are pushed toward the margins of the new system, and further marginalized by association with the Condor culture. This reversal has the effect of undermining dominant philosophical and epistemological theories.

Rosemary Jackson, in Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, writes:

By drawing attention to the relative nature of these categories the fantastic moves towards a dismantling of the 'real', most particularly of the concept of 'character' and its ideological assumptions, mocking and parodying a blind faith in psychological coherence and in the value of sublimation as a 'civilizing' activity.

A unified, stable 'ego' lies at the heart of this systematic coherence and the fantastic explodes this by seeking to make that heart's darkness visible (175-6).
Le Guin defines her language right out in the open (Le Guin *Buffalo* 179). She uses metaphors to embody different aspects of human culture, magnifying some aspects and diminishing others, in order to build a universe according to utopian desires and dystopian fears. She writes The Animal, The Dance, The Way, and The House as the positive metaphors to build her utopia, while she writes The War, The Lord, and The Machine using negative terms to build an opposing dystopia. But new metaphors are necessary for women to find adequate, appropriate terms with which to express authentically feminine discourse, and dystopian oppositions are sometimes very effective motivators.

Rosemary Jackson writes that fantasy "attempts to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints: it is a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss" (3). If feminists lack authentic language and the patriarchal paradigm marginalizes that which is not masculine, then creating fantastic metaphors from marginalized ideas may help generate this lacking language. Jackson continues, writing that fantasy points to the basis upon which culture rests and traces the unsaid, unseen, or unacknowledged aspects of culture (4). But, if we stop to consider why these ideas, of Man as an Animal, who Dances along a life's Way, who dwells in a House that contains other Animals, are so marginal, then we will
easily understand why they are so subversive. These ideas
do not make a profit, and they never will.

These ideas also point to the flaws in the Killer
Story, the basis of our own culture, set up as language and
set in opposition to Le Guin's version of an authentic
natural order. *Always Coming Home* offers a new slant on the
work of archaeological scholars like Riane Eisler and Elinor
Gadon by incorporating the past into myths of the future,
told to shake us out of our complacent stupor, told to make
us re-evaluate the present, told to show us the sickness
inherent in our confrontive patriarchal ideology.
Any paradigm generates its own set of metaphors to describe the world and the relations of things in the world. Le Guin's generative metaphors describe the Kesh world view in *Always Coming Home* to create a paradigm of the future. The power of authority and the intuitive sense of truthfulness of paradigms comes from "deeply buried knowledge" that all humans share, and Le Guin uses Karl Jung's psychology and theory of archetypes to infuse her work with a sense of rightness that justifies motion toward her futuristic paradigm. Senja Gunew, in "Mythic Reversals," writes that Le Guin has "converted the static symbols of allegory into the dynamic symbols of mythology" using archetypal images in her writing (Gunew 179). In *Always Coming Home*, Ursula K. Le Guin presents a convincing case for her Kesh paradigm while using language in such a way as to lead the reader to imagine that the shift from one paradigm to another has already occurred.

Le Guin's special talent for manipulating archetypal patterns lies in switching the currently accredited explanation of a given fable to another explanation using the same archetypal pattern. "By penetrating to the mythopoetic impulse, she has created a new mythology... that involves revolutionizing the symbols of the old mythology"
(Gunew 179). Archetypal patterns are empty logical relations that can be "filled up" with experience or language to justify or discredit one paradigm or another. Archetypal patterns appeal to our intuitive sense of truth by replacing the current content of the archetypes with a new version of the same archetypal pattern. Both paradigms are equally true fantasies, but Le Guin uses her generative metaphors to discredit the patriarchal fantasy that will result in a planet depleted of its natural resources, a permanent residual chemical pollution, a new species of machine intelligence intent on modeling the universe, and a residual mental illness that causes people to kill and enslave each other. *Always Coming Home* makes an intuitive appeal to the reader to change his or her thinking over to her new paradigm, which, in stark contrast to the Dayao culture, is a refreshingly authentic alternative. In order to fully appreciate the meaning of Le Guin's paradigm change we will need a thumbnail sketch of Jung's Archetypes and a few terms. Next we will look at some of Le Guin's myths, and finally the archetypal journey.

**Jung's Archetypes**

In 1919, Jung first used the term archetype. Archetype is a Greek word that means "prime imprinter," originally referring to manuscripts from which copies were made. Archetypes represent the evolution of our animal sensory
apparatus to the current high level of sophistication. This evolution came about as a result of responses to stimuli that had the effect of improving our ancestors' chances for survival. In this manner, sensory perceptions are controlled by evolutionary pressures; most members are "hard wired" to sense the world and respond in the most successful ways. Thus, key stimuli that possess certain characteristics within a certain context trigger an appropriate response.

Archetypes extend to the behavior of all matter, including the initial formation of combinations of atoms necessary for the existence of life. In 1953, Dr. Urey "subjected a mixture of methane, ammonia, hydrogen, and water vapor to a series of electrical discharges over the course of a week" to replicate conditions of the primordial earth (Stevens 71). He found a large variety of organic substances, including amino acids. Subsequent laboratory experiments proved that all the organic compounds necessary for life on this planet "can be produced out of simple inorganic gases without the intervention of human, or divine, ingenuity" (Stevens 72). The next critical stage for evolution was the formation of a replicator: the primal archetype. People, like any other species of plant or animal on this planet, will replicate geometrically to the limits of the food supply. All living things on this
planet, and some non-living things, operate according to this archetype; of course, each species differs in the way it goes about replicating its members. There are many more archetypal patterns than we may discuss in this work. Bettina L. Knapp identifies some other archetypal patterns including: the great mother; the spiritual father; the self/other; the life/death cycle; the death/rebirth mysteries in sacrifice, redemption, and salvation; the dismemberment and eating of flesh; the voyeur; the transvestite; the journey's separation, reunion, and transformation; the night/sea journey; the treasure hard to attain; and religion as an ego-centered reality within objective reality resulting in the annihilation of the self (ix-xvi). Though there are a great many archetypal images, we will concentrate mainly on the two that represent the two paradigms in Always Coming Home: The Great Mother and The Spiritual Father.

In A Jungian Approach to Literature, Knapp writes: "Carl Gustav Jung sought to engage the response of the whole man in the psychoanalytic process, not merely the intellectual nor solely the sexual" (ix). He developed a curative technique that could help mentally unbalanced people and also could help to develop the potential of well-adjusted, normal, and superior humans. Jung wrote that people must have a way to keep in touch with the cosmos, and
suggested that myths can keep people in touch with the cores of their nature because myths evoke some of the archetypal images we all have in common. In support of this, Anthony Stevens writes that

human behavior is highly circumscribed by the genetic consequences of evolutionary adaptation, and... any attempt to adopt forms of social organizations and ways of life other than those which are characteristic of our species must lead to personal and social disorientation, and, ultimately, to the extinction of whole populations (24).

The question is not whether genetics determine behavior, but to what degree genes determine behavior and how rigidly these genetic constraints bind different people. Jung thought that myths help people to lead balanced lives but recent study in ethology and sociobiology shows that myths are essential to the continuation of the species (Stevens 24). Currently, most of this planet's population is socially conditioned and controlled according to theories based on political assumptions that generate less than optimal environments for people who accordingly lead psychologically impoverished lives because their genetic make-up demands more compatible environs. Economic slavery makes people compete for material goods, evaluate themselves in terms of their possessions, and fall away from
spirituality. Modern people are sick because they have lost contact with the traditional resources of culture; the Kesh would say they have their heads on backwards. The only cure for modern people is to re-establish contact with their own archetypal spirituality and attain what Jung called individuation.

Archetypal structures are only empty logical relations, patterns to be "filled up" with content. Myths are one kind of fantastic image that "fills up" logical relations like honey in the comb. In Jung's psychology, archetypes exist as the "hard-wired" thought patterns that all Homo sapiens have in common, genetically determined by countless millennia of evolution. Of course, these "hard-wired" patterns are greatly influenced by many variables.

Jung thought that the mother archetype has a greater effect on the child until the age of five, when the father archetype becomes more important. However, according to Stevens, since Jung, Money and Erhardt (1972) have shown that an infant probably establishes gender identity by eighteen months of age (106). This suggests that the father archetype is active much sooner that Jung suspected. According to Stevens, Jung was correct to say that the father makes the main contribution to child's gender consciousness. A boy slowly realizes that his father and he are similar, basing his gender awareness on identity. A
girl slowly realizes that she and her father are dissimilar in fundamental ways, and her gender awareness is based on difference. However, since the mother establishes a bond with the infant prior to the father's involvement, the girl maintains a positive identification—with—mother while the boy must switch over to an identification—with—father. Hence, the male acquires an outward looking orientation, and is associated with change, is subject to time, aging, and death, is extended out from the home and community to meet the challenges of the world. And the female acquires associations with the earth, unchanging, and timeless; she embraces the unconscious, intuition, and stability (Stevens 106-7). Nature does not leave these childhood environmental associations entirely to chance, but tends to reinforce psychological developments with inherited archetypal patterns.

No child is ever entirely masculine or feminine. Jung was quite clear when he wrote that arbitrary gender distinctions are unhealthy for a culture because one gender will be overvalued while the other is undervalued, creating a psychic imbalance. A cultural imbalance occurs when most of the individuals in a given culture fail to achieve balanced lives through individuation, which occurs when the ego leaves the persona, its protective cocoon, to explore the unconscious. Jung writes that the unconscious is
different for males and females, and coins terms to describe the difference in each gender. He defines the anima as "an autonomous psychic content in the male personality which can be described as an inner woman," and defines the animus as "the corresponding representative of the masculine central sexual elements in the psychology of the woman" (Knapp xii). Le Guin writes about the protagonist in terms of both positive and negative anima/animus conditions, utilizing the different myths in Always Coming Home to describe how a variety of personality types fit into the Kesh culture. She also shows how individuation is affected by the Dayao culture, primarily influenced by the Spiritual Father archetype, and the Kesh culture, primarily influenced by the Great Mother archetype.

Ursula K. Le Guin poses these two primary archetypes as mutually exclusive paradigmatic realities in Always Coming Home. Some confusion exists on this point, however, because the Great Mother is commonly associated with the marginality of women and cyclical patterns, while the Spiritual Father figure is associated with hierarchical power of males in a patriarchal system. These archetypes are gender-marked by convention only: the Great Mother is not exclusively feminine or female in nature, and neither is the Spiritual Father exclusively masculine or male in nature; all people possess both the Great Mother and the Spiritual Father
images. The Great Mother archetype represents a cyclical pattern of birth, life, death, rebirth as new life form; while the Spiritual Father represents the geometric growth of the primal replicator by coming into being, conquering death through life, and triumphing over death at the end of life by ascent to the Spiritual Father. Patriarchal politics of power have inflated the importance of the Spiritual Father archetype out of balance; and, according to Jung, an adjustment to equalize the imbalance is inevitable.

The history of the rise to power and domination of the Spiritual Father is now well-documented. According to Elinor Gadon, in *The Once and Future Goddess*, goddess worship sprang from a civilization of homo sapiens on the European continent that flourished during the upper Paleolithic era (ca. 35,000-9000 B.C.E.). Developing their knowledge of life cycles in plants and animals, these people invented agriculture and animal husbandry, which increased food production and allowed the population to increase; they learned to spin flax and wool with which to weave clothing which released them from dependence on animal skins for protection; they made art to celebrate life, dominated by the female figure. They knew that life comes from the female of the species, so they worshipped the Goddess which symbolizes the Great Mother archetype. There is no evidence of weapons, warfare, violent death, fortifications,
invasions or conquest. For more than 20,000 years this peaceful, prosperous, egalitarian culture flourished and spread (Gadon 22-5). Archeologists have discovered more than 3,000 settlements in Old Europe, but evidence found in ancient myths suggests the civilization extended over the entire European/Asian continent.

The Chinese Taoists also have myths that echo Goddess worship in Europe.

There is internal evidence in the Taoistic texts of Lao Tze and Kwang Tze that the idea of the Tao had an intimate association in early times with the ancient Cult of the West—the cult of the mother-goddess who had her origin in water. The priestly theorists instructed the worshippers of the Great Mother that at the beginning she came into existence as an egg, or lotus bloom from which rose the Creator, the sun-god, or that she was a Pot containing water from which all things have come—the pot being the inexhaustible womb of Nature, and the symbol of the Great Mother-goddess (Mackenzie 302-3).

The water motif, blood or amniotic fluid, is frequently associated with birth/death trauma, and is a vehicle of power for women. Lao Tze highly praises water and women, writing that men should take lessons from both in the governing of their lives. Lao Tzu also writes that the Dao
is like water: "'The softest thing in the world dashes against and overcomes the hardest; that which has no (substantial) existence enters where there is no crevice'" (Mackenzie 313).

The myths of the Near East have the most fully documented case of a paradigm shift, from the Great Mother goddess to the Spiritual Father god. "The Goddess was continuously worshipped for thousands of years (ca. 3500-500 B.C.E.) in the ancient Near East 'during the ascendence and decline of civilizations that flourished and were conquered'" (Gadon 115). At its height, the Goddess religion practiced conservation of life in all its forms, until wave after wave of Indo-european warriors invaded and imposed its patriarchal structure on the people (Gadon 40). As the patriarchal paradigm gathered power, new writings and myths co-opted the Goddess religion, rewriting the universe. Gadon traces a tale of the tragic absorption of the goddess religion into Greek mythology and the final death-blow delivered by the Christian religion. The myths remaining today, with very few exceptions, show the female characters that represent the goddess killed, defeated, outwitted, or transformed into vile creatures.

But the Great Mother archetype did survive in other forms. For instance, the only existing fragment of philosophy written by Anaximander, around 560 B.C., clearly
expresses this archetypal image of the cyclical nature of being that we have been calling the Great Mother archetype.

The Unlimited is the first-principle of things that are. It is that from which the coming-to-be (of things and qualities) takes place, and it is that into which they return when they perish, by moral necessity, giving satisfaction to one another and making reparation for their injustice, according to the order of time. (Hyland 117).

The Great Mother archetype still figured prominently in the minds of many people at that time; indeed, it was so important that Anaximander believed it to be the first-principle from which all else flows. The Goddess religion was overcome by an oppressive patriarchal culture, but prior to its decline the Goddess culture sustained a peaceful existence for thousands of years. This shows that a feminine-oriented paradigm is possible and exists in history, philosophy, and mythology. Gadon agrees with Jung, that a return to a more balanced way of life is inevitable, and Le Guin’s writing attempts to push our unbalanced culture back toward the Great Mother.

Le Guin’s Myths

The myths in *Always Coming Home* tell of the inevitable paradigm shift from patriarchy to an egalitarian paradigm based on a version of the Great Mother archetype. The Kesh
do not have a religion, but a way of life. Much of The Way is described in the myths and the life histories in *Always Coming Home*. Mythology of the Kesh, as with all mythology, is concerned with explaining the origins of the human race, of good and evil, and of natural phenomena. The myths in *Always Coming Home* describe the shape of the lens through which the members of this culture view the universe. If we look closely at the myths, we can see how the Great Mother archetype co-opts or subverts the Spiritual Father archetype by ridicule, scorn, and pity of the wrong kind of thinking. Many of the myths refer to people of an earlier time who had their heads on backwards, whose backward ways poisoned their planet, and how they managed to survive. Creation myths are always colorful; and the Kesh myths are no exception, centering the Great Mother archetype and condemning the Spiritual Father archetype. The gyre, or the heyiya-if, is another form related to the Great Mother archetype, resembling the Yin/Yang symbol of Eastern thought but stressing the relations between two ways rather than the difference of one from the other. Many of the myths in *Always Coming Home* are records of personal experiences that almost everyone has in common, and so express the timeless art of being.

"A Hole in the Air" (Le Guin *ACH* 161) is a direct condemnation of our patriarchal capitalist society which
describes the Kesh reaction to our current industrialized civilization. A hole appeared in the air and a Kesh man went through it to see what was on the other side. He went back to a time that could have been 1990. We live in a very dangerous world according to the Kesh man; our roads are "coated with rotten blood and grease and flesh and fur and feathers" (Le Guin ACH 162). Our food is in boxes, poisoned, and even the fruit on the trees is coated with poison. When we talk it sounds like "'Kill people! Kill people!'" (Le Guin ACH 162). Our air is full of smoke. Our land is full of endless roads and houses. Our water, what water there is left, is orange colored and the fish are dead. The Kesh think our heads are on backwards.

"The Shouting Man, the Red Woman, and the Bears" (Le Guin ACH 226) is a play that recreates the rise and fall of patriarchy, and the origins of their current civilization. An old man, Bodo, limps onto the stage waving his arms and shouting, imitating man's search for the one Truth:

Bodo says:

What was I born for?
What was the reason?
What am I here for?
What must I do here?
Give me an answer!
What was I born for?
Give me an answer!

Answer me why! Why!

Answer me now! Now!

Bodo falls on his face, chanting and groveling. He then crouches praising the everlasting, infinite power he has just discovered. A fat red-haired woman named Avu answers to Bodo that there is no right answer to the wrong question. "Bodo gropes blindly worshiping in the air and gets hold of Avu. He seizes her with a yell of rage and dances her rape and murder. The Bears hurry forward and dance tearing her to pieces and eating her" (Le Guin ACH 227). Bodo repeats his lament, and Avu returns. This time she says that she knows a secret that cannot be spoken, thought, or borne. Bodo calls her unclean, vile, empty, evil, mindless, and uncanny and attempts to send her away. Avu then repents and says she has seen the glory and the power. Bodo commands her to eat dirt. She eats dirt. "Bodo embraces her to have anal intercourse. She twists around and seizes him and dances breaking his neck, castrating him, and eating him" (Le Guin ACH 229). Avu crawls off to join the Bears, Bodo follows. They go into the mountains and live in silence and illness without power—but at least they live. This play reveals the Spiritual Father's drive to find a justification of the universe and his own existence, and his refusal to accept the existential reality that there is none. Avu
represents the Great Mother's confirmation that there is only the great cycle of life, death, and rebirth. The lesson is that, if unchecked, the Spiritual Father will drive people to ruin before they realize that they are only animals.

"Dira" (Le Guin ACH 69) might be an allegoric representation of capitalism, corporations, technology, or even of hate and aggression. A woman finds a thin inhuman disk with legs in the woods. It attaches itself to her neck with plier-like pinchers, then it assumes a human male resemblance. Its name is Dira. There is little food but Dira takes it all and grows fat while the woman and her children slowly starve. Finally the town's people all get together and smother Dira in oil. As it shrinks the woman and children regain their health and Dira escapes back into the woods. In an archetypal form Dira might be a replicator archetype, or any evil thing that attaches itself to a person's psyche, thereby gaining control of the body and proceeding to suck out the life-blood. We can't kill it because doing so would kill the people whom it controls; we can only suffocate the evil thing and reduce its size so it will release the people a little at a time.

According to Jung, creation myths usually involve a joker like Coyote, who is the Navajo equivalent to Prometheus or Loki (118). Coyote creates the heavens and
saves mankind from the floods. She protects, raises, and teaches mankind. In "Dried Mice" (Le Guin ACH 67) Coyote welcomes people into the world and raises them from babies. But the people leave nature, Coyote's House, and go into their own Houses. Coyote doesn't care except that the people take away all the food; she cries: "Bring me my dried mice back!" (Le Guin ACH 68). That is what she is saying when she howls at night: "Bring me my dried mice back!".

"Beginnings" (Le Guin ACH 168) describes four origins of the cosmos. One scholar said the world ended four times that we know of, but Le Guin only writes about three endings. First, a number of huge meteorites made smoke and clouds that blocked out the sun and almost everybody died, then it got cold. After that it got too hot so all the ice melted and most of the people died again. The last time, there were only two humans left, Adam and Eve, who had sex. As a result their offspring were born crazy and "they tried to make the world. All they could do was make it end again" (Le Guin ACH 168). People are still recovering from the last ending. Though the scholar points to natural disasters and man-made death, most creation myths involve Coyote. The people usually get here by walking or by boat from the west. Coyote sometimes tries to chase the humans away but fails, burns the land, and retreats to the mountains. In other creation myths Coyote pulled the heavens together by her
desire for more elaborate music, and where the atoms of
darkness left holes, stars appear to shine through. She
created people from her turds or afterbirth or "spoke"
people by accident (Le Guin ACH 175-7).

"Big Man and Little Man" (Le Guin ACH 165) is a myth
attributing creation to the archetypal Spiritual Father, who
has lost much importance in the Kesh culture. First, the
story goes, there was the Big Man who was "so big that he
filled up the entire world outside the world, everything
there was. There wasn't room for anything else" (Le Guin
ACH 165). He saw "the world inside" and wanted to get in it
so he made a Little Man, and a woman out of dirt, to
populate the world. "He was afraid. He didn't belong there
inside the world, he had no mother, only a father. So he
killed whatever he was afraid of" (Le Guin ACH 165). He
poisoned everything. The Big Man smelled the stench and
left--gone forever. Almost all the people died and the
buzzards, maggots, coyotes, and worms ate the carrion. The
people asked Coyote for help, and "She dug canyons, she shat
mountains. Under the buzzard's wings the forest grew.
Where the worm was in the dirt the spring ran. Things went
on, people went on. Only Little Man didn't go on. He was
dead. He died of fear" (Le Guin ACH 166). The Spiritual
Father archetype, as the central figure of the paradigm,
was held responsible for the poisoning of the earth and the
destruction of most of the people because the feminine was repressed: he had no mother. He repressed his Anima and so was unbalanced, but knew that he was unbalanced, knew that he was poisoning the world with radioactive and chemical contamination, according to the Kesh. He did these evil things intentionally, with malice and full knowledge of the consequences, but he repressed the knowledge along with his anima. He had his head on backwards. Coyote represents nature, and the carrion-eaters transform and purify the world by eating the death and excreting a reborn world.

Creation myths create a new way of life, and the reborn world emerges as an essentially feminine view generated by the Great Mother archetype. The myths carry the hard lessons learned by wrong thinking and hating the world because there is no Truth, there is only the truth of The Animal, The Dance, The Way, and The House. "Dancing the Moon" (Le Guin ACH 257) is a narrative about one of the annual festivals in the valley that celebrates reversal. People get married at the World Dance, forming lasting bonds; but the Moon Dance "goes the other way. It goes out and apart, undoing, separating" (Le Guin ACH 257). The purpose of dancing the Moon is to have sex without conception, to balance out the world with reversal. "Man-living women and woman-living men don't usually dance the Moon; they go off to the summer houses, or look after
the children indoors. Unless they're willing to make love with other-sexed people" (Le Guin ACH 258). Both the World Dance and the Moon Dance come together in human experience; we contain both opposite ideas at once. "You know the heyiya-if comes in to the center and at the same time is going out from the center. A hinge connects and it holds apart" (Le Guin ACH 257).

"Dog at the Door" (Le Guin ACH 297) is a complex existential vision with its roots in the Great Mother archetype and its branches in the nothingness between the two spirals of the heyiya. There is no end to the world but all things must end. This seems to be a paradox, but only because human existence defines what exists and what does not according to human perceptions. If there were such a thing as objective reality there would be no end and no beginning, only existence and change. But human perceptions and definitions split apart what we perceive into pieces that come into and go out of existence and so our culture tends to define beginnings and endings. The Kesh see being as following a path, changing, and following a new path, with no beginnings or endings. Like the seeds in the pouch, we exist as potentialities of ourselves within the balloons of our own spaces, as we evolve along the paths of our lives. We exist and we put things that we see as beginning and endings in "Houses" of our own design, but there are
none, and we think we cannot be in more than one House at a
time, thereby limiting, managing, and defining what is real.

"Words/Birds" (Le Guin ACH 330) is a commentary on
language. Words might seem to contradict each other, but to
say that at least one of two contradictory statements must
be false does not mean that opposites don't exist. Of
course, it does not mean that opposites do exist either.

The word is not the thing; word and thing have each
their own way.... It is true that everything that is
must be as it is, and that nothing is but the play of
illusion upon the void; it is true that everything is
and it is true that nothing is. These words deny each
other wholly. The world of our life is the weaving that
holds them together while holding them apart (Le Guin
ACH 330).

This is the same kind of archetypal image as that in "Dog at
the Door"; but in this case language holds the same relation
to reality as do we, the inventors of language. We invent
words to describe the reality we invent.

The heyiya, the hinge which separates and joins, is the
joining of opposites, the summation of two differences.
This archetype is the Great Mother archetype in another
guise: the Yin/Yang symbol, modified into a double spiral to
reflect the mutual dependence between Ways: the death of the
old Way and birth of the new Way. This archetypal awareness
trickles down to the meanings of words. The hinge common to both arms of the spiral is an empty bit of nothing into which our meanings flow, infusing the word with intentionality. In other words, we live and speak between the lines/arms of past/present, word/bird, male/female, and so on. These relations are imagined islands of continuity or contextuality that float on the infinite sea of chaos. Interestingly enough, the Kesh do not differentiate between fact and fiction in writing literature because all use of language is only an approximation of "like what happened" to them; but they refuse to count intentionally misleading language, like lies, propaganda, and jokes, as literature. (Le Guin ACH 536).

The Journey

With these myths in mind we can better understand some of the implicit meanings in "Stone Telling" and the significance of her archetypal journey. Stone Telling, when she was being North Owl, left home when she was fifteen to go with her father, Kills, to the land of the Condor. She was dissatisfied with her life so she went on a journey; she learned that there is no place like home; and she returned to the valley to live happily ever after. On one level this sounds like the patriarchal myth of The Wizard of Oz: the moral is "be satisfied with your lot in life and be thankful for what you have." As a radical work demanding change,
this says, "Condor is the Other. Look at how terrible it is!" On a psycho-cultural level, North Owl's ego journeys from her protective valley cocoon to face the vile shadow of her animus. She explores the shadow, giving herself over to the culture as completely as she can. As she learns about the Condor's culture she misses the feminine part of herself that she is denied in the animus, the Na Valley. She escapes with the help of her father who, according to Jung, is instrumental in developing gender identity. She then returns to her natural self by choosing her name, which fits her new Way of being. At last Woman Coming Home must learn how to be her name: she must learn to be herself as the summation of her experiences, the hinge of her path ways which includes the shadow.

The journey archetype becomes the rebirth and transformation archetype where one must travel over land or sea to aid the quest into the unconscious: "The search for self in which the protagonist begins in alienation and seeks integration into a human community where he or she can develop more fully" (Pratt 135). Jung called this the process of individuation, a transformation or renovation of the individual so that all faculties are brought into balance and into conscious play. This might include a renewal of the functions or a persona shift in order to strengthen or heal an imbalance in the self. This could
also be a total renovation of the psyche and a rebirth, or emergence of a new personality. The ego must confront its shadow, the animus for women, the anima for men. The animus/ anima takes over the personality and gradually the person recovers her or his own gender. They learn to be themselves. The more the ego hides from the shadow, the greater the adjustment; this applies both to individuals and cultures, according to Jung. The search for self in the confrontation of shadow takes Stone Telling to the Dayao people. Only after she faces this darkness can she return home as a cured, balanced person. Her mother never succeeded in facing her shadow; she could not "gyre," could not progress in Jung's individuation process, and continued to live a miserable, self-denying life. Stone Telling learned that she was always coming home, always learning to be, always returning to the Great Mother.

Always Coming Home as an archeology of the future shows us myths of the past re-written to emphasize different paradigms of invented reality. As life becomes a returning to death, the past becomes a returning to the future; as Anaximander suggests, the first principle is the Great Mother archetype. Stone Telling suggests that as we move into the future we rediscover our origins; and by rediscovering the past we return to the knowledge of our origins, thereby discovering the nature of being a human
animal. We are then free to use the information to shape our futures as authentic individuals. In a patriarchal paradigm power and progress are highly valued; but in order to achieve what they believe to be good, males tend to deny half of their selves by denying the anima, that feminine part buried deep in the male unconscious. But women who live in a patriarchal paradigm find they must either agree to their inherent inferiority or deny their conscious, feminine selves and seek identity within their repressed animus. If we develop according to Jung's process of individuation, we discover and join with the repressed half of our selves, our shadows, thereby coming into our whole beings. Males in a patriarchal paradigm often fail to develop because they deny the anima's existence. The psychological problems that a patriarchal paradigm generates for females is far too complex and varied to discuss here.

In *Always Coming Home*, the journey archetype moves in time, in space, and in character. In time, *Always Coming Home* is the story of the rebirth of civilization from the ashes of a destructive era of frenzied industrial activity whose bad faith nearly destroyed the planet. In space, *Always Coming Home* is the story of the rebirth of the Kesh culture, representing a stage of development through a confrontation with the disease of Man in the valley, resulting in disbanding the Warrior and the Lamb lodges. In
character, Always Coming Home traces the rebirth of Stone Telling who moves through her three life stages. These life stages also parallel the development of the society in which she lives, and of the species to which she belongs. In each case we are always coming home, always coming into our natural being.

The goal of archetypal rebirth is androgyny; Natalie Rosinski agrees: "My study of diverse speculative fictions has confirmed my perceptions of feminist androgyny as a literary force as well as a philosophical construct" (107). As we have mentioned before, Karl Jung also thought that stereotyping the elements of personality, the ideas of masculine and feminine, Animus and Anima, creates a great danger to society (Pratt 137). A mature person will not deny half of his or her being, and maturity of personality comes about when the ego leaves the protective cocoon of the persona and plunges into the unconscious to explore the scary, dark shadow of the unconscious, as Le Guin shows in Always Coming Home. Only two people who are androgynous can really love each other as equals; all other images of love are only sick dependencies, projections, or rape.

Annis Pratt, in Archetypal Patterns in Woman's Fiction, writes that the Rape-Trauma archetype "characterizes much of woman's fiction" (5). She writes about Apollo's rape of Daphne, about how she escapes by turning into a Laurel tree
before he can rape her. This archetype has been co-opted by the patriarchy in order to describe the militaristic attack and subjugation of one group by another. The spear story easily turns into the rape story when gender is involved. The aggressor is always portrayed as the male and the submissive is always portrayed as female to insure that males always control through power. Yey even though the aggressor attacks, he will never take over the woman's "sacred places" because of the natural magic of the place.

The Rape-Trauma archetype forces individual women to practice bad faith and submit to humiliation and slavery in order to survive. Daphne must turn into a tree, deny her true form, in order to protect that true form from corruption and rape. The Rape/Trauma archetype forces women to practice gender subjugation on the societal level; on a universal level, feminine cultures submit without organized resistance. In the time frame depicted in Always Coming Home, the mythic Daphne has returned to her female form: women are free and the culture lives its peaceful ways, except for the Dayao threat. But in our present paradigm there is only a masculine version of rape because the masculist defines reality; the feminine can only retreat from the threat. The feminine hides, protected in its tree-form against invaders. When the invaders leave or die out, the feminine will re-emerge a little older and a little
wiser. Isn't it past time to end this rape story?
CHAPTER III

I chose to write about *Always Coming Home* because this novel is one of the first books I have encountered that describes a believable alternate future. The main point of *Always Coming Home* is to convey the message that some of today's practices cause irreversible harm to the environment and also cause psychological imbalance in people, practices that truly rational people would not allow. People today know that industry and government weapons plants release extremely toxic chemicals into the environment, but are so wrapped up in their high-speed, over-populated, over-consuming life styles they cannot, or will not, do anything to stop it. To a rational society, with members like the Kesh who do not pollute, wage war, or over-populate their world, we seem like very strange people: people with our heads on backward. The idyllic innocence of the Kesh also brings to mind the innocence of children: our children, and all the children in the future. This final chapter will first examine our culture from a Jungian psychological perspective, and last will mention work by women who write in the speculative utopian tradition.

Le Guin gives us an improved future and a goal to achieve, a future to hope for. This optimistic future depends on an evolution in the way people interact. After this era of frenzied profit maximization, if we do not
mature culturally there may be insufficient arable land to support the minimum number of people to insure the continuation of the species. If we who live today can implement ways to reduce the amount of chemical pollutants being dumped on the ground, in the oceans, and into the air, then we may improve our chances for survival. But cultures are rarely affected by individuals and, according to Jung, cultures must mature and undergo individuation the same as humans. Currently, the persona of corporate America denies the shadow in its repressed unconscious, and individual efforts can do little to dam the rising tide of pollution until a cultural movement changes the wasteful practices of an entrenched cultural ego. Unfortunately, the rape of the planet is tied to the Domination model; its pervasive effects permeate almost every aspect of physical and spiritual life on Earth; its reified corporate spirit reduces the purpose of our existence to the production and consumption of commodities; its value system creates myths of success, capitalism, and democracy that demand our belief, that encapsulate us in a metanarrative of political positivism. The only cure is a cathartic upheaval of our cultural consciousness. This desperate plunge into shadow cannot happen spontaneously, however, for reasons that will become apparent. Educators must break the stranglehold of ideological control to prepare future corporate and
governmental executives for the change, or else take responsibility for the planet's inevitable destruction.

Shadow and Society

A great part of the problem is due to the control of power through education and information disbursement based on market demands. Ursula K. Le Guin advocates freedom of information in "Pandora Converses With the Archivist" (Le Guin ACH 333-336), but acknowledges the many complications of freedom of information in an inherently power-based paradigm that colors our interpretation and evaluation of information:

Who controls the storage and retrieval? To what extent is the material there for anyone who wants and needs it, and to what extent is it "there" only for those who have the information that it is there, the education to obtain that information, and the power to get that education? How many people in your society are literate? How many are computer-competent? How many have the competence to use libraries and electronic information storage systems? How much real information is available to ordinary, nongovernment, nonmilitary, nonspecialist, nonrich people? What does "classified" mean? What do shredders shred? What does money buy? In a state, even a democracy, where the power is hierarchic, how can you prevent the storage of
information from becoming yet another source of power to the powerful—another piston in the great machine? (ACH 334-5).

Whoever controls education controls information. The encouragement to dominate other students through competition for grades, classes, jobs, money, and so on teaches students to compete for knowledge. Most students seek knowledge that will give them the most power after graduation. Most college administrators form policies based on the market demand for certain kinds of knowledge. The market, therefore, effectively controls education, and students who dominate, who control, who take the "right" kind of courses acquire the most rewards. Students tend to ignore courses that teach knowledge that does not result in market system rewards. The market is in turn controlled by the corporations, which create and manage the values that perpetuate the power structure using metanarratives.

Modern physics, however, has "delegitimized" the justifications for our current power structure, according to Jean-Francois Lyotard, because, as it turns out, all metanarratives are based on false assumptions (Lyotard 53-60). Paradoxes, inconsistencies, and conflicts in values result, which people tend to repress into the unconscious. Believing in any metanarrative is a delusion, but some people need to believe in one metanarrative or another to
give their lives meaning, relevance, or worth. Values are created and expounded by mythical metanarratives to define meaning, relevance, and worth. Jung thought that our need of myths is determined by genetics, though cultural conditioning reinforces our dependence on mythology. But, in contrast to our need for myth, the sole purpose of metanarrative mythology is to attempt to justify the system and to maintain the power structure. These myths can provide no true justification however, and they rely on psychological imbalance or immaturity to maintain domination through terror. Metanarrative myths have become co-opted as instruments of coercion and control rather that being a vehicle to guide people toward their primal selves, toward understanding of their unconscious minds, and ultimately toward individuation. Instead of leading people toward the discovery of self through confrontation with shadow, metanarrative myths lead away from self-knowledge, reinforcing the persona and threatening would-be deviants with the terror of their own shadows if they stray from the authorized programs. Therefore we should reject the Dominator model and its corrupting metanarratives in favor of creating myths more compatible with our continued being in the world. Educators and intellectuals are the only group of people capable of systematic, planned, intelligent, efficacious action on this front, but to date they have done
From Le Guin's unusual vantage point, she is able to envision a future paradigm based on quantum subjectivity with the purpose of affirming life, as opposed to our present paradigm based on the Dominator model and a metanarrative with the sole purpose of gaining power and controlling people. In *Always Coming Home*, however, the Kesh represent the dominant paradigm, while the Dayao culture represents a barbaric minority. Le Guin replaces the Dayao's patriarchal logic with contemporary physics and feminine archetypes. Her completely subjective approach hinges our sense of time and space and her treatment of the Dayao ridicules any sympathy we have for technology, war, and power. She undermines the reader's supposed position of isolated objectivity by constantly reminding us that she is the translator, evaluator, and commentator, creating the narrative, and manages to imitate a multitude of different subjective points of view, rather than one unified claim of truth and intention. She shows us the folly of our ways in the power structure of the war-like Dayao, who still practice the sick terrorism of the Dominator model.

One might argue that our culture today resembles the Dayao culture only in a grotesquely distorted way; and that, even though there is a controlling patriarchy, we do not burn men and children that we call enemy, own slaves, or
rape women and force them to do menial labor. But Le Guin addresses these objections through Pandora, with agitation:

I know about war and plague and famine and holocaust, indeed I do. Am I not the daughter of the people who enslaved and extripated the peoples of three continents? Am I not a sister of Adolph Hitler and Anne Frank? Am I not a citizen of the State that fought the first nuclear war? Have I not eaten, drunk, and breathed poison all my life, like the maggot that lives and breeds in shit? Do you take me for innocent, my fellow maggot, colluding Reader? I knew what was in that box my brother-in-law left here (ACH 154).

Like Pandora, we all know what is in the box, and we all know our past is filled with atrocities just like the ones committed by the Dayao. She claims that she had to kill off most of the people in the world to write Always Coming Home. But she asks "Was it I that killed the babies?" How much responsibility must she or any of us take for murdering babies in the past or the future? Pandora writes them dead, never born. She tries to push back the inevitable destruction of the planet to give them time, to give us time, by opening the box of Prometheus, the box of our heritage; but it is we who are actually killing them. Pandora thinks there might be hope in the "bottom of the box," but she does not care. The box is the book, Always
Coming Home, and under all the myths and structure and archetypes and pollution and war the only point to the novel is to gain some time, some space to breathe in. Pandora writes that the end of civilization is inevitable; there is nothing we can do about it except to escape for a while into the recesses of our archetypal fantasies and hope that a few of our children will manage to crawl out from under the ruined monuments to our absent gods, to create a better world.

**Feminist Futures**

There is a reason for all this carnage, according to Caroline Whitbeck. She agrees with Karl Jung's theory of how gender difference comes about. Since males must switch over to an identification-with-father when establishing gender identity, they form a self/other opposition identity, to differentiate themselves from their mothers. Females, on the other hand, establish an identification-with-mother at this phase, and form a self/other relation identity because they are the same as their mothers and never need to switch over to a new gender identification. Masculists need structures of power, knowledge, and language modeled after binary oppositions because of inherently confrontational male psychology; but for females, their ontological being takes form in relation to other people.

Not only are our bodies ourselves (rather than being
something that we, as minds, possess), but the bodies, intellects, emotions, souls, characters, and configurations of relationships that we are can be adequately understood only in relation to one another (Whitbeck 63).

Women, according to Whitbeck, need the kind of community that lets them define the whole of their beings in relation to other members of the community, like the kind of feminine discourse that Ursula K. Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* proposes.

According Lyotard, as quoted in Alice Jardine's *Gynesis*, "we Westerners must rework our space-time and all our logic on the basis of non-centricism, non-finality, and non-truth" (66). The "we" in Jardine's estimation of Loyotard means that women, like Ursula K. Le Guin, must create new horizons and envision future utopian civilizations in order to devise more authentic ways to live in the world. Popular novels like *Always Coming Home* are positioning our current culture to evolve into a new paradigm of feminine perspective. The American tradition of feminist utopian writing has had this goal in sight since 1836, according to Carol Kessler. In her book, *Daring to Dream*, Kessler reprints excerpts from sixteen less-known female utopian writers, written between 1830-1980, but comments on many others and includes an annotated
bibliography of feminist utopian writers. The selections in her book include writings by Mary Griffith (1836), Jane Sophia Appleton (1848), Elizabeth T. Cobert (1869), Annie Denton Cridge (1870), Marie Stevens Case Howland (1874), Elizabeth Stuart Phelps (1844-1911), Mary E. Bradley Lane (1880-1), Eveleen Laura Knaggs Mason (1889), Mary H. Ford (1889), Alice Ilgenfritz Jones and Ella Merchant (1893), Lois Nichils Waisbrooker (1894), Rosa Graul (1897), Winnifred Harper Cooley (1902), Caroline Dale Parke Snedeker (1917), and Martha S. Bensley Bruere (1919). In the last twenty years there has been a flurry of activity by female science fiction writers writing alternative feminist futures, some of whom are utopians, writers like Margaret Atwood, E. M. Broner, Dorothy Bryant, Suzy McKee Charnas, Sally Miller Gearhart, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Doris Lessing, Marge Piercy, Joanna Russ, Alice Walker. Ursula Le Guin fits easily in this company of feminist authors, authors who want to change the world, who can envision another better world where all people can live with energy, liberty, and grace.

"Pandora Sitting by the Creek" (Le Guin ACH 99) sees a white steer bone sticking out of the water, a dead bird with its tail in the water, dead branches crossing the creek, and no fish in the water. Insects swarm around the dead bird carcass and waterskaters walk on the surface of the water,
staying dry. Pandora lives in a world where things die or are already dead, so she uses her imagination to create another world where the air is clean and the water is clear, except in the dead zones. Pandora shows us a way into the Valley by showing us ways of looking at nature. Scrub oak is unruly and does not conform to man's order. Man's synthetic order is polluting our world and alienating us from each other, from our work, and from ourselves. But if we can imagine a ridge of scrub oak, not in straight lines, then we can find our way to the valley. And if we can't change anything, not even the our own minds, then at least we can have some time to dream of being in a mythic world.


