

BEYOND DICHOTOMY WITH TAOIST VISION IN LE GUIN'S *THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS*

Park Yoanna Seol, Ali Mustofa, Fabiola Darmawanti Kurnia

Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), Surabaya, Indonesia

E-mail: kyksanjo@naver.com

Received: 2023-05-01

Accepted: 2023-05-24

Published: 2023-06-30

Abstract

The research set out to shed light on balancing awareness, a key Taoist concept that forms the basis of American science fiction author Ursula K. Le Guin's creative works. The balance in Le Guin's work represented the peaceful coexistence of conflicting forces. Le Guin applied Taoist ideas, such as the interdependence of two opposites and non-interference, to convey her concept of balance. *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. Le Guin, published in 1969, served as the primary text for this qualitative study. In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, the concept of balance was built on transcending the binary split and forging peaceful connections between *I* and *the Other*. To reflect her Taoist understanding of the relationship between *I and the Other*, Le Guin created an androgynous universe in *The Left Hand of Darkness* and employed the concept of a journey to the alien territory. The results demonstrated that in Le Guin's make-believe world, the protagonists from two different cultural backgrounds completed their trip by bridging the mental division and acquiring Taoist wisdom. The *Yin-Yang* emblem and the reading of the ancient poem served as metaphors for the peaceful coexistence of dualistic opposites. By transcending dualistic opposites and recognizing a connection between *I and the other*, Le Guin's worldview, which drew inspiration from Taoism, achieved holistic success.

Keywords: *balance; dualistic opposite; interdependence; Le Guin; non-interference; Taoism*

1. Introduction

Science Fiction (SF) is interweaving of scientific possibilities and human imagination. SF tends to be regarded as being escapist or extrapolative because it has no reference to reality. However, Le Guin argues that SF represents the reality of human beings with fictional worlds and becomes a medium for reaching the truth (Le Guin, 1969). She calls herself an explorer who finds Inner Lands and Outer Space (Le Guin, 1979: 30).

SF is a thought experiment that explores human behavior and understanding of certain issues without detracting the reader's attention to reality (Murphy, 2000). A thought experiment in literary works takes the notion of what would happen in a probable world under certain conditions and provide epistemic access to the features of the real world (Elgin, 2014: 222). SF tales is an extended version of a philosophical thought experiment (Schneider, 2016: 10). Thought experiments aim to present enlightenment by rationally answering or asking questions (Sorensen, 1992).

An American writer, Ursula K. Le Guin, conducts a thought experiment in SF. It offers an alternative to realistic fiction, using metaphors to understand *who we are* and *where we are now* (Freedman, 2008: 7; Walsh, 1995). The fictional settings of SF are a good way to explore issues that are important to humanity and particular human conditions.

Le Guin's humanity brings Taoist ideas to the fore. Taoism, an ancient Chinese philosophy dating back to Lao Tzu and Zhuang Tzu, aims to achieve harmony by balancing two opposites. The Tao Te Ching, a Taoist text, states that the Tao (Great Way) is the synthesis of Being and Non-being: "Things in this universe arise from existence, and existence arises from nothing" (Lao-Tzu, Chapter 40). Since there is no preference between Being and Non-being, the distinction between the opposites such as good versus bad or beauty versus ugliness becomes irrelevant (Oldstone-Moore, 2003). Le Guin brought this insight into her SF *The Left Hand of Darkness* (LHD).

Winner of the Hugo Award and Nebula SF Award, LHD is set on one of the galaxy planets. It has a galactic background but deals with human issues, that is "betrayal and loyalty" (Streitfeld, 2018: 85). In LHD Le Guin creates an androgynous world to convey a deep and relevant message that to see what it is to be human that goes beyond gender differences we need "a world other than our own world" (Scholes, 1975: 88). Androgynous societies test gender dichotomies, and empathy and communication create alternative human relationships based on humanity. According to Le Guin, she sought to create an inclusive, flexible, and unstructured society of people "to bring men and women together in a better balance" (2017: 104).

Le Guin talks about relationships with others through the eyes of a cross-cultural stranger. As the story revolves around her two main characters belonging to cultural backgrounds, LHD provides an ideal foundation for studying the nature of human relationships and empathy. Genry travels from Terran (Earth) to an androgynous planet called Gethen and is on a diplomatic mission to persuade Gethen to join the Galactic Federation. The story of Genly and the planetary Chancellor Estraven is a story of loyalty, distrust, and betrayal, but it is also a story of building relationships with others (beings) in an unknown world. Le Guin recognizes the Other through the humanity that accompanies the ever-expanding experience. In Le Guin's work, humanity is a broad system of thought that deals with the problem of accepting the Other (Hull, 1986). Le Guin's work explores humanity by interacting with the Other without prejudice.

An outline for research on the subject of "personal development that is open to human beings" can be found in Le Guin's fantastical universe (Wood, 1986: 183). The protagonists' many excursions on the world are parallel to their inner journey, which guides them to recognize their interdependence. Geographically, they migrate from one area of the planet to the other that is foreign to them, and psychologically, they depart from a traditional way of thinking by removing dichotomous divisions like I vs. the Other.

SF, according to Le Guin, serves as a conduit for discovering the truth about reality. The coexistence of I and the Other is the truth that Le Guin pursues. She focuses on the concept of balance in Taoist thought in this regard. This paper focuses on Le Guin's projection of her balance awareness in LHD in relation to Taoist philosophy. This study investigates the theories of two Taoist philosophers, Lao-Tzu and Chuang-Tzu, who deal with the harmonious interaction between opposed components, in order to gain a thorough knowledge of her Taoist concept.

2. Literature Review

In this part, the elements required to understand Le Guin's writing are discussed. This study focuses on the Taoist vision present in SF that houses her story. The Taoist philosophy is one of the main themes in Le Guin's work (Spivack, 1984). Kelso (2008) makes the case that Taoism is the main framework for comprehending equilibrium in Le Guin's writing. Le Guin's Taoist philosophy incorporates the idea of Yin-Yang, which promotes the notion of harmony between diametrically opposed energies (Li, 2016). With her Taoist narrative mode, Le Guin has elevated science fiction into a major literary subgenre that emphasizes the harmonious interaction between opposing forces by using creative metaphor and a recalling style (Bloom, 1986). LHD bases its concept of balance on overcoming the binary division and forging peaceful connections between the I and the Other.

2.1 Science Fiction (SF)

The modern world's mythology is science fiction (SF). It offers insight into reality by presenting an imaginable future that is shaped and changed by science and technology and has contemporary relevance (Le Guin, 1979: 74). Science fiction uses metaphor to express technological and scientific concepts. Science fiction uses metaphor to express technological and scientific concepts. According to Amis (1976), the story of the scenario in SF is based on innovations in science or technology that are not yet available in our current reality. SF acts as a kind of metaphor that conveys an abstract message while representing the fact of actual human life. It puts the reader in a metaphorical state of mind that demonstrates the adaptability and intellect of people.

Le Guin's SF challenges our preconceived assumptions and diagnoses the real world because it resides outside of consensus reality (Cummins, 1993: 10). And to respond to this, it exhibits balanced power and a comprehension of reciprocal relationships.

2.2 Taoist Thought

The narrative of the situation in SF is hypothesized based on the innovation in science or technology which is not yet available in the world we know; it (Amis, 1976). SF serves as a kind of allegory that represents the phenomenon of existing human life in the form of an abstract message. It induces the reader into a metaphorical state of Mind" that shows human intelligence and human adaptability.

Le Guin's SF, which exists outside of consensus reality (Cummins, 1993: 10), asks questions that directly contradict our preconceived notions and diagnose the real world. And it demonstrates balanced powers and an understanding of reciprocal relationships to respond to this.

The fundamental relationship between two opposing energies that are interconnected and complementary is the basis of Taoism. The fundamental moral rule that guides all human behavior is denoted by the word tao. According to Rosen (1997), it is the "Eternal Way, Supreme Being, and Primary Essence"(xxiii).

Taoism considers the connection between Yin and Yang, which sustains the balancing of the two opposing energies. It does away with binary thinking, such as good versus evil and light versus dark. Is there much of a distinction between good and evil? Lao-Tzu asks (Lao-Tzu, 20). The nature of Yin and Yang is harmonizing within a unity and their tension produces the harmony of the reciprocal creation (Cooper, 2010). In the state of harmony, "High and low rely on each other; Tones and voice make music together; front and behind lead each other. some blow warm and some blow cold; some are strong, and some are weak; some may

break, and some may be broken. Hence the Sage avoids excess, extravagance, and arrogance" (Lao-Tzu, 2; 29).

Recognizing the interdependence of two opposites is the central principle of the Taoist philosophy. "Being and Non-being come together to create harmony, and the harmony gives birth to universal creation. Things in the universe carry both Yin and Yang, through its interaction the universe reaches harmony" (Lao-Tzu, 42); "This and That no longer find their opposites. Its right is a single length and its wrong is a single length" (Chuang-Tzu: Discussion on Making All Things Equal); "There is no dividing line between right and wrong, no borderline can be fixed between big and small. There is no borderline between being short and long (Chuang-Tzu: Autumn Floods). The energy of two opposing forces interacts and complements one another within a larger whole.

The Yin-Yang symbol, which is a circle evenly divided into black and white parts, expresses that everything in existence is made up of complementary opposites, such as "being and becoming, duration and creation, essence and change, male and female" (Cummins, 1993: 46). The interaction between Yin and Yang suggests both unity and a state of transformation. According to Chuang-Tzu, opposites represent the Other. Chuang-Tzu asserts that the existence of one thing gives the existence of the other a purpose; the dualistic opposites must not be at odds with one another, rather, when they are split apart, they must reconnect and resume peaceful coexistence. In search of the path to the Other, Chuang-Tzu investigates symbiotic harmony: "The Great Way is capable of encompassing all things but not of differentiating among them" (Chuang-Tzu: Section 33, the world).

One of the Taoist tenets, *Wu-Wei*, describes a practice called "non-interference" that is carried out objectively (Komjathy, 2013: 21). *Wu-Wei* refers to living in harmony with nature, letting things happen as they do without interfering with how things are put together (Pregadio, 2008). *Wu-Wei* and its inherent strength carry the image of water: "Water does not contend. It adapts itself to the right place that all disdain and finds the way" (Lao-Tzu, 8). Therefore, a Taoist sage "aims at losing until one arrives at not doing nothing (*Wu-Wei*)" (Lao-Tzu, 48); the king "run the world by doing nothing" and "the people change by themselves" (Lao-Tzu, 57); "The wise souls clear their hearts lessen their ambitions. When one does not-doing, may all live in peace" (Lao-Tzu, 3). *Wu-Wei* refrains the subjective value judgment and makes the world emerges as it is. When the fixed value disappears, the essence surfaces.

Le Guin contends that a struggle for power results from the dualism of value, such as superior/inferior; a search for "a promising modality of integration and integrity" (1989: 172) can be accomplished when the uniqueness and difference of everything are accepted and respected.

3. Research Method

This study examined Le Guin's Taoist vision in her SF. To find patterns or themes in the data, the researchers conducted a qualitative analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The main source of the data was the book *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969, Ace Books). Related books and journal articles served as the secondary sources. Close reading, which is a thorough analysis of individual texts, is emphasized in literature studies, according to Flick (2014: 29). In this qualitative study, the researchers used close reading to identify the traits of LHD before taking notes, categorizing, analyzing, and interpreting the data. Words are used in the qualitative analysis to describe written data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Therefore, the analysis reached its final form through the process of writing.

4. Results and Discussion

LHD's uniqueness lies in that Le Guin combines Eastern Taoism and contemporary Western literary genres (Li, 2016). Le Guin's Planet demonstrates that human beings do not lose the power of individuals, their unselfishness, and their humane value (McGuirk, 1986). This galactical world is the setting for stories about loyalty, trust, and sacrifice.

Underlying theme in LHD is inspired by the Taoist idea of balance between opposites. The balance is achieved by rejecting separation of I from the Other and creating a harmonious relationship between I and the Other. It suggests the possibility of unified duality and balance in the human condition. Le Guin rejects the dualistic opposition and replaces it with a "creative and dynamic balance".

The unity of I and the Other is central to Le Guin's idea of balance. Her definition of the Other is the being who is different from yourself (Le Guin, 1979: 97). She understands that the confrontational separation between I and the Other stems from the idea that I am the Self, I am the Master, and all the rest if Other (Le Guin, 1989: 161). Her idea of a family that includes the Other is consistent with Chuang-Tzu's principle that all is equal on the view of Tao: Being infinitely open can connect thousands (Chapter 2: Autumn floods). Lao Tzu said, "The nobility depends upon the common man for support, And the dignified ones depend upon the humble for their base" (Lao-Tzu, 39).

In LHD, the stories of Gethen myths, legends, glacier travels, and religious practices exhibit how the Taoist ideas, namely interdependence of opposites and non-inteference are embodied in Le Guin's fictional world.

4.1 Interdependence of Opposites

1. Myth and Legend

Derived from human perception, mythology is a representation of how the human being perceives, understands, and relates to the world (Le Guin, 1979: 76). Through the myths and legends of the planet, Le Guin shows two contrasting sides that the world is engaged with.

The planet Gethen shares an Orgota creation myth that starts with a pair of opposite elements: "There was nothing but ice and the sun" (Le Guin, 1969: 227). The sun is associated with yang, which represents light, and ice is associated with yin, which represents darkness. An ice-shape called *I Bleed* created the Earth's hills and valleys from the sun's excrement. By creating hills in the sun and valleys in the shadows, *I Bleed* created two of her most primitive expressions of yin and yang. *Ice-shapes* allowed the sun to soften them into milk. They sacrificed themselves to produce milk and awakened those who were asleep. A man named Edondurath was the first to wake up and, in extreme terror, killed all his brothers except the youngest, to whom he swore a chemering (loving bond). Their offspring had a piece of darkness (Le Guin, 1969: 228). Edondurath wondered why his sons were followed by darkness (Le Guin, 1969: 229). His Kemmering replied: "because they were born in the house of flesh, therefore death follows at their heels" (Le Guin, 1969: 229). At the beginning of creation, the sun and ice coexist. But the myth ends in a uniform world: "There will be nothing left but the ice and the darkness" (Le Guin, 1969: 229). The Orgota myth presents a new perception of coexistence by showing opposites such as Ice/Sun and Light/Darkness. The creation myth shows that the world was born from two opposing sources, consistent with Taoist thought: "One is born out of Tao; Out of One, Two is born; Out of Two, Three is born; Out of Three, the universe is created. The created universe carries Yin and Yang (Lao-Tzu, 42)."

The legend *Estraven the Traitor* alludes to the contrasting relationship between loyalty and betrayal. The two clans have been fighting over farmland for three generations. However, two of his descendants from each domain join hands, realize their similarities, and bring peace to the domains. They realize that when they put their hands together, they are matching like the two hands of one man (Le Guin, 1969: 129) and exchange their wish for peace: there will be peace between our houses (Le Guin, 1969: 132). Ironically, the one who brings peace to the two families is labeled a *traitor* by his clan mates. Heroes of universal human society are treated as traitors by specific local groups. And history repeats itself. A native of the Karhyde Kingdom on the planet Gethen, Estraven cleverly resolves territorial disputes to avoid war. But the King sees it as the crime of treason (Le Guin, 1969: 45). The story implies that the dichotomy between betrayal and loyalty is a relative concept according to the stance. Chuang-Tzu elaborates on the relative concept. View from Tao does not perceive This and That as the opposite being; therefore, the recognition of right always follows the recognition of wrong. Tao does not acknowledge boundaries. Sages recognize both being small and large equally regardless of their uselessness: (Chuang-Tzu: Discussion on Making All Things Equal).

2. Glacier Journey

By focusing on the two opposing images present in LHD—cold and hot, light and darkness, and isolation and union—Lake (1981) addressed Le Guin's dualistic viewpoint. Lake applies William Blake's maxim that *Without Contraries is no Progression* (Blake, 1975: p.xi) in interpreting these opposing features. Blake claims that progression starts with opposites, such as attraction and repulsion, reason and vigor, and love and hate. And opposites result in both good and evil. Evil actively arises from energy, while good passively obeys reason. Heaven is good; hell is evil. The core of Blake's principle implies that opposites may coexist within a human being. Blake's philosophy, according to Lake, is extremely important to comprehending *The Left Hand of Darkness* because the androgynous society in the novel is a basic manifestation of Yin-Yang relation.

Le Guin employs the use of opposing concepts such as warmth and coldness to convey her dualistic perspective. In the legend *Estraven the Traitor*, a warm hut becomes the site where two descendants of rival families meet during a snowstorm. The Orgota creation myth depicts a house of a corpse standing on the ice. At night, within the tent, they experience a sphere of heat, a heart of warmth (Le Guin, 1969: 230) in contrast to the icy-white sphere of daytime. During their journey, Genly and Estraven talk through mindspeech within the warm tent, signifying their growing closeness. Genly confirms that the rapport was there (Le Guin, 1969: 241). These contrasting places represent the locale of a desired union (Rass, 1986: 158).

Genly shares his ability of intuitive mindspeech with Estraven, which enables them to communicate without speaking. A feeling of connection acts as “the bridge” (Le Guin, 1969: 237) that inspires them to achieve spiritual interconnectedness. As their friendship and empathy grow, skepticism is gradually replaced. Genly learns to come to terms with the sense of duality that governs the light and dark world of Gethen. He establishes an “I and Thou” relationship with Estraven, which is “not political, not pragmatic, but mystical” (Le Guin, 1969: 246).

On the ice field, *cold and light (no shadow)* is the serious obstacle. When shadow disappears under certain weather conditions, they find it hard to make even one more step (Le Guin, 1969: 251). Faced with the danger on the ice sheet, Genly and Estraven realizes

that harmonious opposites are essential for walking: "It's queer that daylight is not enough. We need the shadows, in order to walk" (Le Guin, 1969: 252). And Estraven recites Torner's Lay, a traditional poem of the planet, in this moment:

Light is the left hand of darkness and darkness the right hand of light. Two are one, life and death, lying together like lovers in kemmer, like hands joined together, like the end and the way (Le Guin, 1969: 224).

The poem highlights the reciprocal relationship between opposing forces and emphasizes the duality that expresses inherent unity (Watts, 2019). The pairs, e.g., life/death and light/darkness are different features of the same thing. With the creation of this poem, Le Guin displays her holistic insight that reflects the interaction of two opposing elements. In response to Torner's Lay, Genly draws the Yin-Yang symbol of Taoism, which symbolizes the interconnectedness of dualistic opposites: "double curve within the circle, and blacked the yin half of the symbol," (Le Guin, 1969: 252). Through the poem and Yin-Yang drawing, Le Guin underlines the wholeness that originates from balance and the mutuality of Yin and Yang. The Yin-Yang relationship is a universal principle that generates creative tension within a unity (Cooper, 2010). The interrelationship of Yin and Yang is implied by the Gethenians who possess both male and female physiologies (Filho, 2021). Such duality acts not as an internal opposition but as complementary parts of a whole.

The journey proves to be a turning point where Genly and Estraven succeed in establishing their genuine communication. The two main characters representing different worlds realize that communication can proceed by overcoming their preconceptions and prejudices (Cornell, 2001: 325). Genly, with his initial prejudice, assigns Estraven to a masculine role but gradually discovers the intricacy of his friend's gender. He overcomes his own biases and ultimately accepts Estraven as he was (Le Guin, 1969: 236). The crossing of the glacier, relying on each other, serves as a metaphor for interdependence. After enduring a treacherous journey together, a strong bond is formed between the two: "You for my sake – I for yours" (Le Guin, 1969: 214).

The Taoist concept of humanity is achieved through the harmonious interplay of opposing factors. The envoy from Terran and the prime minister of the planet reach a point where they share everything that was worth sharing (Le Guin, 1969: 236). Accepting differences is a key aspect of relationships between I and the Other.

4.2 *Wu-Wei* (Non-Interference)

Wu-Wei refers to a state of being where things occur without interference. In Le Guin's novel, personal development is linked to *Wu-Wei* (Cummins, 1993). According to Lindow (2012), in Le Guin's universe, distress is caused by doing, so spiritual development is rooted in the Taoist wisdom of not-doing (Lindow, 2012: 249). *Wu-Wei* involves non-interference and disregards fixed value judgments (Komjathy, 2013).

Le Guin's interpretation of *Wu-Wei* is exemplified in the religion of Handdara in the Karhide kingdom. The core principle of Handdara is non-interference and its followers lead an introverted life, obedient to their rule of inactivity (Le Guin, 1969: 72). Inactivity and non-interference allow for flexibility and adaptability that move with the flow and the wind (Watts, 2019). Handdara is an elusive religion, resembling the doctrine of Taoism: "Tao is elusive and hard to grasp yet there are structures and objects in it. Tao is obscure and hard to make out yet there is a spirit in it (Lao-Tzu, 21)."

The Handdara philosophy aims to *unlearning* (Le Guin, 1969: 80) rather than accumulate knowledge. Reducing one's knowledge is the goal of Lao-Tzu's Taoism, as he states that "The practice of Tao consists in deduction day by day, till one has reached the level of non-action. By this very non-action everything can be accomplished" (Lao-Tzu, 48). Handdara regards ignorance as the highest form of knowledge, as its leader emphasizes a life free from learning and verifying: "Ignorance is the ground of thought. Unproof is the ground of action" (Le Guin, 1969: 81). Handdara's concept of ignorance shares similarities with Lao-Tzu's idea of thought: "The ancients who knew how to follow the Tao aimed not to instruct the people, but to keep them ignorant" (Lao-Tzu, 65).

The Gethenian way of thinking embodies the concept of non-interference, expressed through the recurring word *nusuth*, meaning no matter in Karhide language (Le Guin, 1969: 72). A physician who attends to Genly after his journey through the glacier epitomizes the nusuth attitude when he advises, "Rest. Lie down like the rivers frozen in the valleys in winter" (Le Guin, 1969: 269). In Taoism, the valley represents a state of ease and open-mindedness: "The Spirit of the Valley never dies, and it serves you with ease" (Lao-Tzu, 6): "Open-minded, like a valley (Lao-Tzu, 15)." This is the nusuth state.

The Handdara religion's worship focuses on the concept of creative dualities, which closely symbolizes the Taoist holistic vision. When Genly meets the Handdara leader Faxe and his followers, they are practicing the Handdara discipline of trance which involves extreme sensitivity and awareness leading to self-loss (Le Guin, 1969: 70). The trance state, which oscillates between knowing and unknowing, focusing and unfocusing, reflects the Taoist sense of balance.

The Handdara religion's followers follow the natural flow of the world without relying on fixed theories or doctrines, and they do not recognize institutions, priests, or oaths. The Handdara's principle of noninterference prevents the Karhide people from judging their opponents and damaging their opponent's shifgrethor, a social authority that represents prestige, face, place, the pride-relationship (Le Guin, 1969: 32). It is an indirect way of communication that links oneself to the Other.

In contrast to the Handdara's unlearning, Genly stubbornly clings to his biased knowledge regarding the feminine traits of the Gethenian people. Despite his two-year stay on the planet, Genly fails to perceive the Gethenians for who they are, instead viewing them first as a man, then as a woman (Le Guin, 1969: 30). Genly makes derogatory remarks about feminine characteristics, such as when he describes the king as laughing shrilly like an angry woman pretending to be amused (Le Guin, 1969: 47), or when he refers to the superintendent of the island as a landlady due to his voluble, prying, spying, ignoble, kindly nature (Le Guin, 1969: 62). Estraven believes that the primary obstacle to Genly's mission is the lack of communication between him and the society, which is caused by mutual ignorance: "He is ignorant of us: we of him" (Le Guin, 1969: 152). This prejudice is a significant barrier to cross-cultural communication.

In LHD, Estraven's practice of Wu-Wei is characterized by his fluidity and flexibility, which enables him to accept the coexistence of opposing views. He believes that to oppose something is to maintain it and to be an atheist is to maintain God (Le Guin 1969: 153). Estraven's open-mindedness allows him to comprehend the different perspectives of Genly and himself: "We've seen the same events with different eyes (Le Guin, 1969: 192). His obliging attitude allows him to react so wholly and rapidly to a changed situation (Le Guin, 1969: 197); "He knows when the great wheel gives to a touch, to know and act" (Le Guin, 1969: 185).

The Handdara philosophy opposes the notion that humans are *Lords of the Earth* (Le Guin, 1969: 223). Instead, they focus on the relationships between all living things. Their non-interference principle enables them to create a civilization that is in harmony with nature and can survive in the harsh conditions of the Gethen planet.

The concept of *Wu-Wei* is significant in understanding the androgynous society in LHD. It represents the flexibility that expands human thinking beyond existing boundaries. Androgyny encourages people to choose their place in society regardless of propriety or custom (Heilbrun, 1982: xi). Brown believes that androgyny is an assertion that humanity should move into a world in which individual behavior is freely chosen (1986: 226). Le Guin's creation of an androgynous society emphasizes the importance of balance and rejects dichotomous thinking. She emphasizes the reciprocity and integration between I and the Other. The journey metaphor in LHD illustrates the achievement of balance by the protagonists, who undergo both an outward and inward journey, accepting each other's essence and achieving mental maturity.

Table 1 shows an example of the Taoism keyword that Le Guin's interprets in LHD.

Taoism	LHD
Wu-Wei	The core principle of Handdara is <i>noninterference, obedient to their rule of inactivity</i>
Yin-Yang	Light is the left hand of darkness and darkness the right hand of light

Table 1. Taoism Keyword in LHD

5. Conclusion

Le Guin incorporates Taoist thought into her literary work and demonstrates her awareness of balance. Le Guin's attitude suggests the possibility of harmonious duality and peaceful coexistence of human conditions. In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Le Guin creates an androgynous society on the planet as a metaphor for harmony. She uses the theme of *journey and encountering an alien in the galaxy* to convey her idea of balance. The sense of balance in LHD means overcoming binary opposites and creating an ideal relationship between I and the Other. The Taoist principles Le Guin insists on throughout the narrative are *the interdependence of two opposites* and *non-interference*. By embracing these principles, Le Guin establishes alternative human relationships that address the issue of accepting the other based on humanity.

Le Guin embodies her Taoist idea in the narratives of myth, legend, glacial journey, and religious practices of Gethen people. In the Orgota creation myth, images of opposites appear, e.g., ice/sun and light/dark and presents a new insight into coexistence. The legend of the traitor implies relativity in the interpretation of the dichotomous concept. The religion of the Kingdom of Karhide on the planet practices non-interference that respects the natural flow of the human spirit without relying on prejudice. The culmination of these two principles of Taoism is glacier crossing. In the glacier scene, Le Guin emphasizes wholeness that originates from balance. She emphasizes empathy through the drawing the yin-yang symbol and reciting the ancient poem that contains the novel's title. In LHD, the yin-yang relationship is a universal principle that creates creative tension within unity. The results show that Le Guin's Taoist view of balance achieves a holistic state by transcending dichotomous opposites and recognizing the interdependence of I and the Other, self and other.

References

- Amis, K. (1976). Starting points. In M. Rose (Ed.), *Science fiction: A Collection of critical essays* (pp. 13-31). A spectrum Book.
- Blake, W. (1975). *The marriage of heaven & hell*. Oxford University Press.
- Bloom, H. (1986). *Ursula K. Le Guin*. Chelsea House Publishers.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Brown, B. (1986). The left hand of darkness: Androgyny, future, present, and past. In H. Bloom (Ed.), *Ursula K. Le Guin* (pp. 225-234). Chelsea House Publishers.
- Cooper, J.C. (2010). *An Illustrated Introduction to Taoism*. World Wisdom.
- Cornell, C. (2001). The interpretative journey in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*. *Extrapolation*, 42(4), 317-327.
- Cummins, E. (1993). *Understanding Ursula K. Le Guin*. University of South Carolina Press.
- Elgin, C. Z. (2014). Fiction as thought experiment. *Perspectives on Science*, 22 (2), 221-242.
- Filho, DA. R. (2021). The Taoist myths of winter: Mythopoesis in the left hand of darkness. *Mythlore*, 39(2), 49-62.
- Flick, U. (2014). *The sage handbook of qualitative data analysis*. Sage.
- Freedman, C. (Ed.). (2008). *Conversations with Ursula K. Le Guin*. University Press of Mississippi.
- Heilbrun, C. G. (1998). *Toward a recognition of androgyny*. Replica Books.
- Hull, K.N. (1986). What is human? Ursula Le Guin and SF's great theme. *Modern Fiction Studies*, 32 (1), 65-74.
- Kelso, S. A. (2008). Boldly to re-venture: New writing on the works of Ursula K. Le Guin. *Paradoxa*, 21.
- Komjathy, L. (2013). *The Daoist tradition*. Bloomsbury.
- Lake, D.J. (1981) Le Guin's twofold vision: Contrary image sets in "the left hand of darkness". *SF Studies*, 9 (2), 156-164.
- Le Guin, U.K. (1969). *A left hand of darkness*. Ace Books.
- Le Guin, U.K. (1979). *The language of the night: Essays on fantasy and SF*. Perigee Books.
- Le Guin, U.K. (1989). *Dancing at the edge of the world*. Grove Press.
- Le Guin, U.K. (2017). *No time to spare: Thinking about what matters*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Li, Q. (2016). Taoism as ethics, science as background: On the left hand of darkness by Ursula K. Le Guin. *International Journal of English and Literature*, 7 (11), 167-171.
- Lindow, S.J. (2012). *Dancing the Tao: Le Guin and moral development*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *AISHE-J*, 3 (Autumn), 3351-33513
- McGuirk, C. (1986). Optimism and the limits of subversion in the dispossessed and the left hand of darkness. In H. Bloom (Ed.), *Ursula K. Le Guin* (pp. 243-258). Chelsea House Publishers.
- Murphy, P. (2000). *Farther afield in the study of nature-oriented literature*. UP of Virginia.
- Oldstone-Moore, J. (2003) *Taoism: origins, beliefs, practices, holy texts, sacred places* Oxford University Press.
- Pregadio, F. (Ed.). (2008). *The encyclopedia of Taoism*. Routledge.
- Rass, R. (1986). Determinism, free will, and point of view in the left hand of darkness. In H. Bloom (Ed.), *Ursula K. Le Guin* (pp. 155-170). Chelsea House Publishers.

- Rosen, D. (1997). *The Tao of Jung: The way of integrity*. Eugene, OR: WIPF & Stock.
- Schneider, S. (Ed.). (2016). *Science fiction and philosophy: From time travel to superintelligence*. Wiley Blackwell.
- Scholes, R. (1975). *Structural fabulation: An essay on fiction of the future*. University of Notre Dame Press.
- Sorensen, R.A. (1992). *Thought experiment*. Oxford University Press.
- Spivack, C. (1984). *Ursula K. Le Guin*. Twayne Publishers.
- Streitfeld, D. (ED.). (2018). *Ursula K. Le Guin: The last interview and other conversations*. Melville House
- Walsh, W. (1995). I am a woman writer; I am a western writer: An interview with Ursula Le Guin. *The Kenyon Reviews*, 17(3/4), 192-205.
- Watts, A. (2019). *Tao: The watercourse way*. Souvenir Press
- Wood, S. (1986). *Discovering worlds: The fiction of Ursula K. Le Guin*. In H. Bloom (Ed.), *Ursula K. Le Guin* (pp. 183-210). Chelsea House publisher.