

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of 08 Mai 1945/ Guelma

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of Letters and English Language

جامعة 08 ماي 1945/قالمة

كلية الآداب و اللغات

قسم الأدب و اللغة الإنجليزية



Option: Literature

**Humanism in Usula K. Le Guin's Postmodern Science Fiction**

**Case Study: *The Left Hand of Darkness***

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture**

**Board of Examiners**

**Chairwoman:** Mrs. Leila AIOUNI

**-(MAA) University de 8 Mai 1945/Guelma**

**Supervisor:** Mrs. Meryem BOUREGAA

**-(MAA) University de 8 Mai 1945/Guelma**

**Examiner:** Ms. Soraya CHIHI

**-(MAA) University de 8 Mai 1945/Guelma**

**Candidates**

BENCHEIKH Amira Riane

BOULEKHRAS Dounya Malak

**July 2021**

## **Acknowledgements**

First of all, we are gratefully indebted to Allah's guidance to finish this modest work. We are firstly indebted to Mrs. Meryem BOUREGAA for her advice, assistance, motivation and for her long patience with us. We also thank her for the amazing year that we have spent together.

Without forgetting the ones who have helped and encouraged us during the whole work: Our parents, our families thank you very much.

Special thanks to the jury members Mrs. Laila AIOUNI who was our teacher of written expression during First year, and Ms. Soraya CHIHI for reading this humble work.

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is firstly dedicated to Allah who showed me the right path. I also dedicate it to my supervisor BOUREGAA Meryem who provides me with the needed support to finish this humble work. I would like to thank the most gorgeous parents in the world: BENCHEIKH Abdelhak and BERRADEI Nora for their priceless encouragement and unconditioned love and care for five years and to my beloved sisters: Sara, Yasmine, and Loua who gave me the necessary support. I also dedicate it to my lovely nephew Habib and my sweetie niece Maya without forgetting my dearest friend and partner Boulekhras Dounya Malak with whom I spent the most beautiful days in my life and who helped me a lot to finish this work. I too dedicate it to my grandmother's soul who left us this year but never left my heart and to my uncles Khaled and Houssine.

I would also like to dedicate it to all the teachers from whom I learned a lot since the beginning of my journey as a little girl who has a dream to become a teacher of English until this moment.

-BENCHEIKH Amira Riane-

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is firstly dedicated to Allah who showed me the right path. I dedicate it to the most gorgeous and amazing parents in the world: BOULEKHRAS Elkhair and FERGANI Zakia for their priceless encouragement and unconditioned love and care the whole long twenty years of studies. I would like to dedicate it to my supervisor BOUREGAA Meryem my inspiring teacher of literature, my supporter and my guider to finish this humble work. I also dedicate it to my beloved sisters: Nardjes, Lilia, my brothers Haithem and Ilyas. I too dedicate it to my grandparent's souls, my uncles Mouhamed, Ghoulem, Ali, and my aunts Atika and Fatiha. without forgetting my dearest friend and partner, BENCHEIKH Amira Riane with whom I spent the best days of my life and who helped and supported me a lot to finish this work.

To my cousins Mayssem, Maram, Douaa, Chaima, Ahmed, Zaki, Amar, Saleh, Chamss, Issam and Seif. I dedicate this work for them.

- BOULEKHRAS Dounya Malak-

## **Abstract**

This work examines Humanism in American Postmodern Science in one of the most famous American writers' works Ursula k. Le Guin (1929-2018). It also studies the main elements of Postmodern Science Fiction and explores the aspects of Humanism within such genre of fiction as a philosophy, a cultural trend, and even a literary doctrine. The case study in this research *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) is a fiction which displays new technological and humanistic dimensions. Through her fragmented narrative technique and the description of extraterrestrial planets, Ursula Le Guin sets Humanity in opposition to High Technology and questions the final survival of her characters. This dissertation displays three chapters that demonstrate to what extent Ursula Le Guin's science fiction supports human essence and highlights human values through the use of technology. The research method is therefore, an eclectic one which makes use of different theories including the psychological theory, the philosophical theory, and the literary theory.

**Key words:** Humanism, Postmodernism, Science Fiction, Androgyny, and Ursula Le Guin.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	
Chapter One: American Science Fiction: An Introduction to the Genre of the Sixties.....	1
I. American Postmodern Science Fiction.....	2
I.1. An introduction to the Genre.....	2
I.2. The Pulp Era: The Golden Age of Science Fiction.....	6
I.3. Postmodernism and Science Fiction Writing.....	8
I.4. The American Postmodern Science Fiction and the New Wave.....	12
II. Humanism and Androgyny in Science Fiction.....	16
II.1. Humanism and Science Fiction.....	16
I.2. Androgyny as a New Genre of Science Fiction.....	19
II.3. Humanism and Ursula le Guin.....	25
Chapter Two: <i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i> as a Postmodern Science Fiction .....	28
I. The Narrative Technique in <i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i> .....	29
II. The Essence of Technology in Postmodern Science Fiction in <i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i> .....	36
III. The Deconstruction of Gender in the Novel.....	40
Chapter Three: The Humanistic and Androgynous Representations in <i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i> .....	43
I. The Humanistic Representation in the Novel.....	44
II. The Androgynous Representation in the Novel.....	49

Conclusion.....58

Works Cited.....60

## Introduction

Science Fiction is the mirror of society as it deals with exceptional styles, extraordinary events and phenomena which have an essential role in society. Postmodern American literature portrays the world after World War Two through investigating different subjects concerning the literary changing of the world in general and the American society in particular. Science Fiction is a periodical theme in literary production during this period as a trend of writing adopted by writers to flee from the war, its consequences, and to create a futuristic vision to the world. Ursula k. Le Guin is a controversial postmodern writer of science fiction, who writes about unusual works and themes. Her masterpiece, *The left Hand of Darkness*, that is agreed by most critics as one of the most famous works of postmodern science fiction. The novel follows the story of Genely Ai, a human native of Terra who is sent to the planet of Gethen as an envoy of the Ekumen. Ai's mission is to convince the nations of Gethen to join the Ekumen; however, he faced a problem of understanding their culture. Individuals on Gethen are ambisexual which means without a fixed sex which has a strong effect on the lifestyle of the planet and creates a barrier of information to Ai.

The work was written by Ursula k. le Guin; her original name is Ursula Kroeber, who is a famous American writer best known for science fiction and fantasy, interested in character development and language. Her first three novels, *Rocannon's World* (1966), *Planet of Exile* (1966), and *City of Illusions* (1967), introduce beings from the planet Hain, who established human life on habitable planets, including Earth. This research aims at investigating the characteristics of postmodern science fiction in the American literature. In addition, it tries to discuss the humanistic and the androgynous features in relation to the postmodern science fiction literature. Finally, the main focus is to highlight to what extent Ursula k. Le Guin's science fiction supports human essence through examining her novel, *The Left Hand of Darkness*. The work attempts to answer the following questions, How does Ursula Le Guin



display Postmodernism in her Science Fiction masterpiece? How Humanism is significant in such Postmodern Science Fiction?

The study examines the characteristics of the postmodern American science fiction writings. The novel will join imagination and technology to reflect the humanistic features in a postmodernist science fictional context. It will show the existence of the humanistic modes and androgynous features in the American literature mainly in the work of Le Guin, despite the technological and fictional development which exists at that period. The method to be used will be eclectic due to the relevance of different theories philosophical psychological and queer studies. Many works are of great importance for this research like: Harvey's book *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (1989) that discusses the origins of postmodernity, Copson and Grayling's book *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Humanism* (2015) that deals with the definition and origins of Humanism and Le Guin's essay 'Is Gender Necessary?' (1976). Ursula le Guin's essay explains her theory displayed in the novel it will include the psychological theory, the philosophical theory and the literary theory. This analysis is based on a deep understanding of the American postmodern science fiction genre that helps the readers to create a given vision about science fictional aspects in Le Guin's novel. It focuses mainly on different Humanistic features, and Androgynous theories that contribute to the investigation of the human essence in an age controlled by technology.

This work focuses on discussing the emergence of a movement in science fiction in American literature. It will also deal with how science fiction helps us to examine what it means to be human in a technologically and scientifically focused setting. In the late 1960s and 1970s, science fiction actually preceded the theoretical debate on the Gender and discussions on subjects, such as, gender roles and androgyny. At that period emerged a new movement which was known according to Higgins as the New Wave, "sought to combine

SF's extrapolative power and sense of wonder with avant-garde literary experimentation” (74). In this era, the focus shifted from technology to the characters themselves, from the hard science (Physics and Biology) to the soft science (Psychology and Sociology). Tihana Bertek in her thesis emphasized the shift in the topics discussed at that period. So, the subjects that interest the writers are no longer about describing things, such as, the size of the universe, the destiny of social classes . . . etc. However, now they shifted their focus to the character itself (Le Guin, “Mrs. Brown” 105, as qtd. in Bertek 9).

According to Psychology Professor Nick Haslam (2006), the two ways of dehumanization of a human being are rejecting their unique human attributes (cognition, sensibility); and the other one is the animalistic form where you identify others as animal-like character (as qtd. in Wu, 4). The androgynous concept has been very famous since the first publication of *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula Le Guin in which a number of women writers started to deal with this new concept. According to Pamela Annas androgyny has two levels one is psychological and social that focuses on the personality while the second aspect is what is called the androgynous moment.

The work will be mainly divided into three chapters. The first chapter will provide a theoretical background about the American postmodern science fiction, its historical development and major aspects in addition to the key concepts and notions emerged in this era. Moreover, it will investigate the historical background of Humanism and androgyny and their representation in the postmodern science fiction literature. The second chapter analyzes *The Left Hand of Darkness* as a postmodern science fictional narrative by highlighting its characteristics mainly Le Guin's narrative technique, the technological features and the cultural aspects of the society. The last chapter represents the heart of this study. It represents a detailed analysis of the Humanistic and Androgynous representations in *The Left Hand of Darkness* based on a deep and detailed analysis of the nature of the Gethenian society.

## **Chapter One: American Science Fiction: An Introduction to the Genre of the Sixties**

Science fiction is a literary genre that emerged in the modern period which is a branch of literature that deals with developments in science and technology that relates futuristic ideas and imagination such as; time travel, space exploration, and fantastic stories. It deals with the impact of scientific innovations and technological developments upon the society and the individuals. It dates back to the period after the second world war where everything was damaged and destroyed, the writers at that time tried to find an escape in the science fictional writings and started writing about traveling through space or talking about strange creatures.

The era of the 1960s and 1970s witnessed the existence of a new movement in the history of science fiction known as the New Wave. The emergent movement paved the way to the existence of writers who are mainly Americans such as: Ursula k. Le Guin, Judith Merril, and many others in which their pieces of writing added a lot to literature in general and science fiction in particular. The genre faced fundamental changes in both the form and content for further exploration of the essence issues of modern society. The reason which led to the presence of science fiction is not only the significant issues of psychology and sexuality, but also the most paramount literary movements of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the post war period. This chapter then will examine the nature of the literary genre of Science Fiction and trace its development from modern to postmodern times.

## I. Postmodern Science Fiction

### I.1. An introduction to the Genre:

The genre of science fiction is difficult to define. It's more like the mindset of science fiction. The Yugoslav academic, writer and critic Darko Suvin in his essay "On the Poetics of Science Fiction Genre" (1972), Suvin clearly defines science fiction as "novum", meaning "strange newness" or "estrangement". For him, this uniqueness was created when the writer states facts in an imaginative way; what makes his novel different from other types are the two aspects on which it is: uniqueness and knowledge that made him a phenomenon of his time (Suvin 374). In order to better understand the relationship between science fiction, cognition and alienation, it is necessary to dig deep in the understanding of their world. The American professor, Carl Malmgren, in his work *Against Genre/theory: the state of science fiction criticism* initially relied on defining two parts of science fiction: "world" and "story"; an act controls the development of events and helps to create a coherent whole while the former is a fictional world. The weird factor is achieved through unrealistic representations (139-140). When you combine reality with fiction, you will feel this genre.

Indeed, in the late 1960s and 1970s, science fiction predicted theoretical discourses about gender and discussions on topics such as gender roles, androgyny or heteronormativity. As a space for imagining a new world and replacing society and different nations, science fiction can be used as a platform for feminism and critical thinking about gender, sexuality, social roles, oppression, fertility, patriarchy, and so on. During the social movements in the 1960s including, anti-war movements, gay rights, African American civil rights and counter-cultural movements, and at the same time a second wave of feminism took place. After Betty's works *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), "Equal Pay Act was Passed in 1963" and "Passing Contraceptive Pills", feminist science fiction writers began to reject Masculinism in

science fiction and sex discrimination. Ursula K. Le Guin wrote, “were getting thrown open to all kinds of more experimental writing, more literary writing, riskier writing . . . And of course, women were creeping in, infiltrating. Infesting the premises” (The Paris Review as qtd. in Bertek 7). The writings of these authors questioned social inequality and "even further explores the new concept of the balance of power between men and women" (Higgins 77 as qtd in Bertek 7).

It is challenging for many writers and historians to trace the literary roots of science fiction; this problem faces many historians because they failed to find an area to start out. According to the British science fiction writer Stableford:

The most awkward problem facing historians or science fiction has always been that of finding a place to start. Different concepts of what science fiction is or ought to be have led different writers to different points of origin. If one sees science fiction as a series of fantastic tales dependent upon a prolific imagination then one is likely to claim an ancestry for the genre which dates back to the True History of Lucian of Samosata -a second century skit on travellers' tales featuring an absurd trip to the moon. If one sees it in a slightly more sober light as a mythology of the modern age then one is likely to favour the Odyssey as an appropriate fountainhead. (66)

The origin of science fiction is related to the different definitions of the concept which led the writers to different roots. One example is that, if one loves fantastic stories he sees the beginnings of the genre are associated with Lucian of Samosata’s *True History* that dates back to the second century. It is a story about visiting the moon. However, for mythologists the birth of science fiction is the Odyssey (8<sup>th</sup> century). Within the book *The History of Science Fiction* (2006) many writers stated that the history of science fiction started with Mary Shelley’s ‘*Frankenstein*’ in 1818 (Alkon as qtd. in Roberts 93). It was a very influential tale at

that period. The story begins when Robert meets Frankenstein, who starts narrating his story and his love for knowledge, that led to creating a creature looks like him. According to the British author and editor Mann in *Mammoth Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (2001), “ Brian Aldiss proposes in his excellent history of the genre, *Billion Year Spree* (1973), that we should view the classic Gothic Romance by Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818), as the first novel to be truly recognizable as SF” (8). Mann emphasized on the idea that *Frankenstein* shows the beginnings of science fictional stories, which takes different ideas and concepts from mythology, poetry and philosophy, but it adds to them the additional science dimensions. All these attempts did not show the real pioneer of science fiction they are only hints about its beginnings.

Edgar Allan Poe, an American writer, poet, editor and a literary critic is another major figure in the history of science fiction and the American best known award ‘the Edgar’ is named after him. His works mainly Sonnet – to Science, written in the early 1820s and “Eureka” (1848) was very important to the genre. “Eureka” is an amazing poetic essay that talks about the exploration of the nature of the universe through astronomical telescopes. Another important work of Poe is *Hans Phaal* (1835) this work was revised in 1840 and become known as *The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall*. The story is about travellers’ tales beyond the Earth’s surface, and its preface became the first manifesto for modern science. He wrote many other influential works such as, *The Colloquy of Monos and Una* (1841) and *A Tale of the Ragged Mountains* (1844) (Stableford 18-19). Another famous figure in the writings of science fiction is the Irish-born American writer Fitz-James O’Brien (1828–1862) as stated in *The History of Science Fiction* (2006). He wrote significant number of short stories whom have a clear impact on the first form of the short story since the term was not coined until 1984. His creative and special mood attracts the readers to read his own short works. One of his famous works is *The Diamond Lens* published in the *Atlantic Monthly*

in 1858. According to the Canadian writer and critic Clute and the Australian literary scholar Nicholls, one of O'Brien's techniques in his science fiction narratives is the use of what the American scholar H. Bruce Franklin calls surface realism (as qtd. in Roberts 108).

The French astronomer and author Camille Flammarion (1842–1925) is a major figure in the nineteenth century mystical science and he was working for the Paris observatoire. His first work was about the life on the other planets of the solar system. His book was published under the title *La Pluralité des mondes habités* (*The Plurality of Inhabited Worlds*, 1862). He has a very powerful and influential style and the success of his first work encouraged him to write other literary pieces such as: *Les Inhabitants de l'Autre Monde: Révélation d'Outre Tombe* (1862) (as qtd. in Roberts 113). During the 1860s another famous writer the French novelist, poet, and playwright Jules Verne (1828–1905), started publishing his famous *Voyages Extraordinaires* published between 1863 and 1905. His voyages focused on the relationship between people and technology. He made a method that is able to extrapolate contemporary technology which opened the way to the application of hypothetical locomotive technologies to laborious exploration and leisurely tourism. He made another imaginative works such as *Voyage au centre de la terre* (*Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, 1863), and then he was convinced that the key to success is to control his imagination (Stableford as qtd. in James and Mendlesohn 20).

Herbert George Wells, a British novelist, teacher, historian and a journalist is an icon in the science fiction evolution, and he was considered as the father of science fiction. His famous novel entitled *The Time Machine* (1895) was the first of a series of enabling devices that enabled logical inquiry into the far reaches of time and space, which had previously been severely hampered by its reliance on out-of-date narrative structures. He created a new item known as Cavorite, which stops the gravity of the Earth allowing people to move in any directions (D'Amassa 144). Mann also emphasized on the importance of *The Time Machine*

(1895), he stated: “Everything about *The Time Machine* was fresh and original. Wells had given readers an ostensibly 'scientific' method for traversing the time streams: he posited a device created through the application of advanced science that would allow its inventor to actually visit times to come” (11). This machine was an open door for readers to the future. It enabled its creator to travel to the future, and it was unique and new. Moreover, it was clearly a scientific means used to travel over times. This brilliant writer wrote many other works, such as, *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), *The Invisible Man* (1897) and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). The latter was a very interesting tale full of suspense; it deals with a new theme which is the existence of aliens. It poses the question about if aliens that existed on the Red Planet decided to invade the earth what would happen. This novel paved the way for other works that deal with this theme (459).

Other authors, such as, the American literary critic, editor and professor Samuel R. Delany in *Babel-17* (1966) and the American astronomer, physicist and author Carl Sagan in his novel *Contact* (1985) imagined aliens making contact with us through interstellar signals or radio transmissions. For others our first contact with aliens will be when we reach their homes in the galaxy. Robert Heinlein, who is an American Science Fiction writer, introduced this theme but through different vision in his novel *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961). Through the novel a human was adopted and raised by an alien and once he returned to earth he became the alien (Mann 460).

## **I.2. The Pulp Era: The Golden Age of Science Fiction**

The term 'pulp' refers to a specific sort of fiction, which was printed in groups of niche-marketed magazines. The printed tales and stories in these magazines were not expensive for the editors and they were written by prolific hack-writers. These stories were printed on low-cost paper from wood pulp. Its goals were mainly to make it costless and to sell widely and as



a result they will make money. There were many magazines appeared by the 1920s and they were about different genres, such as, crime pulps, adventure pulps, western pulps and other tastes. The first pulp was the American magazine known as the *The Argosy* that was published since 1886. Another example is *Pearson's Magazine* (monthly, 1895–1939) and *The Strand Magazine* (monthly, 1891–1950); the latter are British magazines (Roberts 174).

The period of 1920s to 1930s is the greatest explosion of science fiction known as the magazine era. The term pulp means the poor quality wood of pulp papers that the magazine used to publish their cheap works. Hugo Gernsback's Magazine *Amazing Stories* was founded in 1926, and it is considered as the first magazine devoted for science fiction (Attebery 32). There are other magazines appeared in the nineteenth century, such as, *Blackwood's* and *The Strand* in the UK and *Putnam's* and *Atlantic Monthly* in the USA (32). According to Attebery in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, "Gernsback's *Amazing*, however, was the first not only to limit its fictional contents to stories of scientific extrapolation and outer-space adventure but also to attempt to define the genre which the editor initially called 'scientifiction', but began to refer to as 'science fiction' by 1929"(33). Gernsback's magazine *Amazing* did not limit its content only to fictional stories or outer space explorations but also it was the first to name the genre as 'scientifiction' and then in 1929 as science fiction.

To go broader, the magazine in its beginnings has three separate publishing traditions: the first one was 'scientific romance' which was exemplified by Poe, Verne and Wells. The second tradition was known as 'story-telling formulas'. And the last one was 'scientific journalism'. According to the professor Landon (2019), Gernsback's magazine is the first pulp magazine directed to science fiction only, and he is regarded as the father of American magazine science fiction (138). It was not only made to educate readers but also to make them think about the future (Attebery 34). According to Attebery, Gernsback is the father of the

first era of pulp magazines and John W. Campbell stands for its second era which was known as the golden age of science fiction magazine (37).

According to the American science fiction and fantasy writer Robert in *The History of Science Fiction* (2006):

But it is as editor of *Astounding* (which he renamed *Analog* in 1961), a post he took up in 1938 and which he retained until his death, that Campbell made his greatest impact on the genre. He was a proactive editor, with very definitive ideas of what constituted a good story, unafraid to press authors into revisions, to revise their work himself without their say-so, or often simply to reject, in the service of a Platonic ideal SF story. (195)

His first career was as a Gernsbackian pulp writer, he wrote some good stories such as: *Who Goes There?* (1938); however, the period where he really influenced and had a great impact on the genre is when he worked as an editor of *Astounding*. He renamed it *Analog* in 1961. In the service of Platonic ideal science fiction stories, Campbell was a very active editor; he used to do his work by himself. Since he had many firm ideas of how a good story is constituted, he always pressed the writers and revised their works himself without their consent. Campbell was admired by a number of authors like Van Vogt, Robert Heinlein and Isaac Asimov. At that period, he asked his writers to stop explaining every single detail while writing but instead leaving the audience wondering about the future events of the story. This technique was used successfully by Heinlein, who used hints in his narratives, and he let the floor for the audience imagination (Attebery 39-40).

### **I.3. Postmodernism and Science Fiction Writing**

Postmodernism is a movement that has caused fundamental changes in human ideology, culture, literature, and other social, economic, and political aspects, especially in the United States. The critic Huyssen in his article *Mapping the Postmodern* (1984) argues that

postmodernism is a transformation. He pointed out that this is completely divorced from the cultural, economic and social system. The theorist David Harvey in *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989) expressed his interest in the British critic Jonathan Raban's novel *Soft City* (1974), this interest is due to the fact that Raban was successful to depict the real world in the 1960s with the first glimpses of postmodernism. Unlike many others, Raban was able to depict a troubled society, caught in the dangers of the society, and continued to copy technical materials to consumers. Harvey believed that this unique consumer copy is redefining cultural life with obvious personality changes. He attributed the post-war prosperity to the changed destiny of mankind. In this era when new markets and new technologies have been accumulated, and great innovations have been brought about, the destiny of mankind has changed (124-147). The hierarchical classification of the bourgeoisie and other classes is declining, and technology is replacing them, putting the world under the ultimate control of technology.

According to the researcher Gomel in her work *Postmodern Science Fiction and Temporal Imagination*, one of the prior characteristics of postmodern science fiction is time in which Time is not only the most important aspect of human experience but also the most difficult aspect to achieve. The concept of temporality in the past is completely different from ours, but even within the framework of modern postmodern culture, there are many conflicting discourses of time, including discourses claiming that time has passed. However, even if this is true, the end of time can be expressed in another form of time. Time is reborn as a result of denial, and returns to haunting postmodernism with its unauthorized historical specter. It has always been the subject of intense philosophical, scientific, and ideological struggles. However, more importantly, time is also the subject of many narrative descriptions, and the form of these narratives reflects the nature of what is happening; Temporal cultural conceptualization, in which our perception of time has been shrouded in history. Yet, the

rebellion of postmodern theory against time and history is based on the concept of time, that is, "the linear sequence of past, present, and future", which is, a repressive and universal temporal logic of the Enlightenment (Currie 78 as qtd. in Gomel 8). Postmodern theory and its radical epistemological skepticism are the only forms of transient perception.

In most cases, this dilemma is ignored. Postmodern narrative theory is derived from the classical narratology of Gerard Genette and Seymour Chatman, which is based on historical chronological and discourse, the difference between the time, the distorted, newly arranged pictures, the sequence, and duration of activities for artistic purposes. Therefore, the chronological alternative to postmodern narratives is regarded as a parasitic "violation of the temporality of reality" (Richardson 48 as qtd. in Gomel 8). In her own discussion of postmodern temporal poetics, however, she adjusts the alternative forms of temporality, contingency, multiplicity, and circularity with acronyms and the lack of a common temporal context. The temporal experience of postmodernism is "coextensive and inseparable from the individual event", so that "it has become difficult to abstract any notion such as 'history', 'progress' or 'entropy' from temporal phenomena that seem to be only randomly related to each other" (Heise 28-29 as qtd. in Gomel 9). Postmodern writing (which she strictly defines as literary avant-garde) becomes a sideshow of narrative phenomena that abdicates any attempt to connect with the larger social context and even less with the physical universe: "postmodernist narrative time is detached from any specific human observer, and in some cases is not meant to represent any temporality other than of the text itself" (Heise 67 as qtd. in Gomel 9).

Another crucial element of science fiction is the use of non-human characters which are the Aliens. Aliens are non-humans from places outside the earth. Although human scientists have not yet discovered Alien life forms elsewhere in the universe, there are still speculations that other organisms may have evolved somewhere among the vast inhabitants of SPACE.

Until the 20th century, people always thought that life could exist on other planets in the solar system. Early astronomers believed that they could see a network of canals on the surface of Mars, and some believed that this was sufficient evidence of its existence. In *the war of the worlds* (1898), H. Wells thought about this phenomenon and asked what would happen if the aliens on the red planet were hostile and decided to colonize the earth. This is a wonderful novel, full of distance and wit, and paves the way for using the term Aliens (Mann 462).

Wells also stated that there are many other stories about alien invasions. In fact, the story of alien invasion has become one of the most popular and widely used devices in this genre. However, as science fiction became more and more complex, the authors questioned the wisdom of displaying higher alien intelligence in their works. After all, logically, such a creature may be completely beyond our understanding. The Polish writer Stanislaw lem wrote the classic novel *Solaris* (1961), in which an interstellar adventure discovered what, looked like an intelligent ocean on a distant planet. He tried to communicate with human scientists, but at the same time he made them crazy. It is still incomprehensible and mysterious. Yet, other authors believed that it would be more appropriate to include extraterrestrial artifacts that indicate the existence of alien species in their work, but they do not include the author's detailed description of the alien's anatomy and appearance (462).

Moreover, a remarkable component of this genre is Alternative Reality in which it is a reality that is different from the natural order of the world. This world is not our world, nor it is considered a natural norm for the characters in any story to live. Deconstruction has produced many alternative realities. This can be achieved through drugs that change the way of thinking, sleep states, alternative dimensions or the use of virtual reality. In science fiction literature, there are usually other realities in which characters fall asleep or get knocked on the head before entering the fantasy of existence. However, this device has also been widely used

in science fiction. Both Philip K. Dick and Jeff Noon are famous for using the fantasy caused by drugs to construct alternative internal reality

The American writer Dick forced a group of monotonous human settlers who had escaped the PLANET colony to deliver a new medicine. The British author Jeff Noon produced a similar effect in *Vurt* (1993). His characters consume 'Vurt feathers', so they can slide into the dream game world. In the real world, reality is only one of many choices. Greg Egan who is an Australian writer forced his character to create a complete virtual reality world in *permutation city* (1994), where he and his companion escaped in search of immortality. The American writer Tad Williams invited his character to create a huge digital city with a similar effect in his series *Another Country*. Size cracks have also been used to move characters between realities. In *Raft* (1991), Stephen Baxter forces his protagonist to slide into a narrow parallel universe, where the physical conditions and laws of physics are far stronger than in the past, and Edwin Abbot uses alternative sizes as a vehicle for exploration. Alternative realities are useful resources in science fiction because they enable authors to rationalize wonderful events or experiences while maintaining the level of normality in the real world.

#### **I.4. The American Postmodern Science Fiction and the New Wave**

The New Wave science fiction had emerged during the 1960s and 1970s, and it is a new subgenre of science fiction that had a great influence on the genre. The authors of that period tried to develop the genre through new techniques, and they emphasized 'soft' sciences, such as, psychology and sociology over 'hard' sciences, such as, physics. Some of those writers are J.G. Ballard, Samuel R. Delany, and Ursula K. Le Guin. There were many new technological, political and social transformations taking place at that period which help readers understand the New Wave. And there was a deep conflict between opponents and proponents of these

transformations because of their negative impacts on the world (Higgins 1). This movement was adopted from the French cinema's *nouvelle vague* (Broderick 49). Critics used the term New Wave to talk about a group of authors of the 1960s and 1970s, who were no more convinced and satisfied by the traditional and old science fiction conventions.

The term was coined by Christopher Priest that was linked to the London magazine *New Worlds*. The latter was reorganized to produce experimental literature under the rule of Michael Moorcock during 1960s. Moorcock had demanded for new changes in the magazine, in which he asked authors to produce passionate and genuine science fiction. He had chosen four writers for the mission; J. G. Ballard, Brian Aldiss, John Brunner and E. C. Tubb. Moreover, this sub-genre is the result of the technological effects on the people and its signs during the cold war, such as, The Cuban Missile Crisis and Neil Armstrong's first landing on the moon in July 1969 (Broderick 48). According to Roberts (2006):

New Wave is often taken to be a deliberate attempt to elevate the literary and stylistic quality of SF, which to a certain extent it was; but what Ballard's remarks make plain is the extent to which it was also a reaction to the sedimentary weight of the genre's backlist which new writers were beginning to feel burdensome. By the 1960s so much SF had been published, so many ingenious ideas developed and fleshed out, that thinking of something new, bringing novelty to the SF novel, was becoming harder and harder. What the New Wave did was to take a genre that had been, in its popular mode, more concerned with content and 'ideas' than form, style or aesthetics, and reconsider it under the logic of the latter three terms. (231)

Robert claimed that the New Wave is generally considered to be a concerted effort to improve the literary and stylistic standard of science fiction to some degree. However, Ballard's remarks reveal that it was also a response to the genre's backlist, which was

beginning to feel burdensome to new authors. By the 1960s, there had been so much Science Fiction written, so many brilliant ideas produced and fleshed out, that coming up with something different to add creativity to the Science Fiction novel, had become increasingly difficult. So we can say that the New Wave took the popular genre that focuses on the ideas and content rather than the aesthetics, style and the form and try to review it according to the logic of the previous three concepts.

According to the Hungarian professor, editor and author Csicsery-Ronay the New Wave was considered as the open door to postmodern literature that influenced the American narratives (117). Everything was under the influence of postmodern realities and the cultural contexts in which technology emerged. In *Archaeologies of the Future* (2005), Fredric Jameson described the New Wave as the “global dawn of hallucinogenic age” which means the beginnings of dilemmas and uncertainties. He designed this movement to talk about dilemmas of everything, such as, the status of language, problematizing reality and other instabilities (93). According to Mann in *Mammoth Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (2001), when humans failed to imagine the outer world and spaces they shifted their focus to the human essence and to question the reality and existence of human beings based on philosophical insights (17). Moreover, Moorcock asked many writers to shift from the old fashioned form of science fiction short story and to produce something new with new ideas. He encouraged new concerns, such as, unconventional narrative structures, and the authors shifted their focus to the sociological and psychological effects of their works. So at that period, the core of narratives for postmodern authors became the human nature (Mann 18). All the changes occurred on literature, its themes and the literary styles are the result of the postmodern influence on the whole field and on the genre of science fiction.

The senior editor, teacher and science fiction author Higgins claimed that this wave challenged the hidden cultural assumptions about race, gender and other cultural values that



are not discussed in the society. The female new wave writers focused mainly on such assumptions in their writings to shed the light on what is happening. According to Higgins: “. . . Sandra Dorman-Hess and Zenna Henderson both use alien characters to explore themes of race, immigration, and alienation . . . ” (4). So the new focus shifted to use alien characters rather than human characters to shed the light on cultural themes, such as, race and alienation in the society and not as the usual case where they were used as enemy attacking human beings. As an example Dorman-Hess's short story "*When I Was Miss Dow*" (1966), where she used the alien race as a reflection for societal human conditions.

Mann discussed an important theme in science fiction which is alternate world. It is a description of a version of the Earth in which the history took a different pivot. And from the very important subjects discussed under this theme are the results of the Second World War and what the world would have become if the Nazis and Hitler won the war. And it was explored by many writers such as Philip K. Dick and John Barnes (461). The American fantasy, science fiction, horror critic and author D'Amassa emphasized on the idea mentioned by Mann, that Dick explored the theme of alternative history and he discussed it in his novel *The Man in The High Castle* (1962). The events of this story where on a different planet where he changed one point in history mainly when the Germans and Japanese won the war, and this will change the results from the real event. This novel was considered as the best one of his other writings, and it won the Hugo award.

## **II. Humanism and Androgyny in Science Fiction**

### **II.1. Humanism and Science Fiction**

With the development of a new perspective of science fictional literary studies, the focus now shifted to question the nature of humans in the postmodern literature. It studies the relationship between human beings and their surroundings. With the new technological developments, researchers, linguists, writers and scientists start questioning and worrying about the existence of humanity in the postmodern writings and life. The emergence of new technological aspects influenced and changed many parts of the human life, for example, the emergence of artificial beings. The technological chaos resulted in questioning the existence of human identity in the postmodern narratives and characters.

According to the British Humanist leader and writer Andrew Copson and the British philosopher and author Grayling Humanism is not a recent term it dates back to a very old period of time mainly the 13th and 14th centuries. But the first use of this term in English was in the nineteenth century. In the beginning, it was translated from the German word "humanismus" by scholars to talk about the emphasis on classical studies during the Renaissance (2-3). He stated that:

Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. It stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethic based on human and other natural values in the spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. It is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality. (6)

Humanism is considered as a democratic and ethical life philosophy that provides people with the right and the obligation to define and control their own lives. It advocates for the creation of a more compassionate society through the use of a moral code based on human

and other natural values, as well as a spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities and it doesn't believe in the supernatural opinions about reality. According to Copson and Grayling:

The humanist has a feeling of perfect at-homeness in the universe. He is conscious of himself as an earth-child. There is a mystic glow in this sense of belonging ... Rooted in millions of years of planetary history, he has a secure feeling of being at home, and a consciousness of pride and dignity as a bearer of the heritage of the ages and growing creative centre of cosmic life. (10)

Copson and Grayling stated that each human being has this great sense of belonging to the universe, and he identifies himself as a son of the earth. He feels a secure sense of being at home, as well as a sense of pride and dignity as a bearer of the whole heritage of the centuries and a rising creative center of cosmic life, rooted in millions of years of the history of the planet. According to the specialist, educator, speaker and author Kendra Cherry Humanism emphasizes the importance of the human dignity, values and ideals; and it suggests that people are able to solve issues by applying logic and science. Moreover, Humanism focuses on assisting people in living well, achieving personal progress, and making the world a better place rather than focusing on religious traditions. It is also considered as a worldview that prioritizes human elements over religious, divine, or spiritual considerations. Humanism is based on the belief that people have an ethical obligation to live lives that are personally rewarding while also contributing to the greater good of all people.

Professors of philosophy Herman E. and Herman k. (2006) stated that the humanistic approach to psychology has long argued for the integration of psychology, natural and social sciences, and the humanities by looking for common ground between psychological insights and ideas from biology, sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy, theology, literature, and

theater. Humanistic psychology provides an integrative paradigm for comprehending the holistic and interconnected human experiences that can improve lives, as well as showing us how to comprehend human endeavors in numerous fields (Schneider et al., 2001 as qtd. in Herman E. and Herman K. 273). Donawerth (1990) stated that Mary Shelly's novel *Frankenstein* was published in 1818, even before the coinage of the term science fiction which was in 1920s. This novel was considered as the first to discuss the ethical question of the creation of life (39 as qtd. in Herman E. and Herman K. 274). The second author was Isaac Asimov (1983) who focused on defining social science fiction as a branch of literature that discussed and focused on scientific advance's impacts on the human beings or humanity. They also argued that:

Lipps (1990) provided examples from social science fiction with a feminist "What if?" orientation that might help psychology students better understand gender, sexuality, interpersonal relationships, and language. He has also successfully employed the novel *The Left Hand of Darkness* (Le Guin, 1969) and the short story *Bloodchild* (Butler, 1996) in an honors undergraduate course to explore such topics. Clearly, women writers such as Ursula Le Guin and Octavia Butler have made unique contributions in the quest to explore what it means to be fully human. (As qtd. in Herman E. Herman K. 275-276)

These examples mentioned by Lipps are written by women writers to discuss themes like gender, sexuality, language and interpersonal relationships. For example, Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) or Butler's *Bloodchild* (1996). *Olander and Greenberg* (1979) also discussed many concepts, such as, archetypes, holistic vision, the use of psychological journey and the inner realm of the psyche in the work of le Guin's. It was very clear that these women writers have made great contributions to define what it means being a full human.

Optimism is another defined aspect of Humanism; it is about expecting things to be well and that everything will be good. According to the author Elizabeth Scott, MS Optimism is a positive mental state marked by hope and confidence in one's ability to succeed and have a bright future. Optimists believe that good things will happen, whilst pessimists believe that bad things will happen. Optimistic attitudes are associated with a variety of advantages, including improved coping abilities, reduced stress levels, improved physical health, and greater persistence in achieving goals. The Assistant Professor Christopher Brooks stated that Humanism is an old philosophical paradigm that focuses on the beauty and the importance of human kind in our universe. Humanists used to write and celebrate human beauty, achievements and human mind in their works and studies. Brooks indicated that Humanism was an optimistic attitude toward intellectual and artistic possibilities. These possibilities mentioned all the achievements of the old world and used it to prove that humans are the crowning achievement created by God.

## **II.2. Androgyny as a New Genre of Science Fiction**

In the most common form, androgyny can be defined as “a person who unites certain of the essential characteristics of both sexes, and who consequently, may be considered as both a man and a woman, or as neither a man nor a woman, or bisexual or asexual” (Busst as qtd. in Bertek 15). But even such a simple and convincing definition ultimately tells us what is androgynous and not what it tries to do because it is repeatedly created and copied “in relation to the various requirements of history, culture and the literary imagination” (Hargreaves 3 as qtd. in Bertek 15). However, the definition of androgyny has changed especially in the second wave of feminism; the concept of "androgyny" was spread, although it was not an undisputed or widely accepted environment for feminist writers and critics. However, it is “largely integrated into a fight for psychological and sociopolitical equality between the sexes” (Weil 145 as qtd. in Bertek 20) and in 1984, *Time Magazine* even called it the eleventh major trend

in American history. “Whether we choose to think about it or not,” Cynthia Secor pointed out that: “androgyny is in the air – it is pertinent, popular, seemingly possible now, and terrifying” (162 as qtd. in Bertek 20). Why has this concept become so important during this time? As Catriona MacLeod explained, the mythology of hermaphrodite “seems to hold particular fascination for those historical moments when cultures are actively engaged in rethinking the most basic assumptions about gender and sexuality” (13). For some feminists, androgyny is a familiar but forgotten figure that can play a role in feminist struggles against gender tyranny (Heilbrun et al. as qtd. in Bertek 19), while for others, this is just a myth of patriarchy, and it threatens oppressed women in the distance. Gender discrimination is bad for women and has no political significance for feminism (Harris and Secor as qtd. in Bertek 19).

In addition, during this period, androgyny became particularly diverse, “serving as the expression of a range of sexual identities, social possibilities and imaginative freedoms” (Hargreaves 10 as qtd. in Bertek 19), which included a utopia for building a better and more just society. In *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970) the Canadian-American feminist, writer, and activist Shulamith Firestone warned that due to the natural division of labor, that is, the fertility of men and women, only half of the population develops, and the other half is at the expense of sacrifice. When we eliminate “the sex distinction itself: genital differences between human beings would no longer matter culturally” (11 as qtd. in Bertek 20). Others go further; they believed that eliminating gender inequality will eliminate all other forms of inequality-economy, race, and gender and bring us closer to the realization of the ideal community, because this will lead to a general change in social attitudes (Bazin and Freeman 186 as qtd. in Bertek 20).

The American feminist, activist and writer Drea Dworkin tried to return hermaphrodite to feminism, emphasizing that myths are important because they affect our behavior because “as the substructure of the collective” (164 as qtd. in Bertek 20). She criticized the

patriarchy's interpretation of hermaphroditism as arbitrary imposing hierarchical values on the basis of what she believed. She also believed that by building a hermaphroditic community, we can completely give up power as a social reality “that is the final, and most important, implication of androgyny” (191 as qtd. in Bertek 20). The authors of the New Wave used the power of science fiction to visualize alternative societies and found new tools to challenge existing assumptions (especially gender). Le Guin pointed out that in the mid-1960s, she felt the need to “find and understand the meaning of sexuality and the meaning of gender” (155-156). As a legitimate place for theory (Butler, *Bodies* 135 as qtd. in Bertek 29), literature can give people “surprise that comes from reading something that compels you to read differently” (Christian 62 as qtd. in Bertek 29). The literary story of Le Guin's androgynous society in *The Left Hand of Darkness* does not only allow you to clarify gender issues theoretically, but also helps us solve problems from new and different perspectives, because it has the novelty of hermaphrodite form. At the forefront of the fight against patriarchy, and provided a platform for expressing feminist ideas and criticism.

During this time, a number of theories came into existence including Judith Butler's concept of gender expressiveness which was first introduced in her essay “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory” (1988). Butler's main assumption in this article was her performance theory which is, “Gender is the knowledge of performance imposed by social sanctions and taboos” (520). In her view, performativity is the execution of certain actions in reality. It is through this performance behavior that gender is established on the general behavior of the body, and in these performance behaviors, gender can be established. This means that according to Butler's theory, the body is not the basis of gender, because gender develops over time under the influence of social, cultural and historical factors. Simone de Beauvoir also mentioned in *the Second Sex* (1949) (as qtd. in Van Kesteren 8) that “one is not born, but, rather, *becomes* a

woman” (as qtd. by Butler 519). Butler cites Beauvoir’s statement to imply that when a person acts in accordance with certain physical behaviors, gender evolves. When a man performs certain "masculine" behaviors, he determines his gender based on those masculine behaviors, while women determine their gender based on female behaviors.

An example of gender behavior might be emotional for women but stoic for men. These male and female behaviors represent a social binary number. Like most societies in the world (520), due to the compulsive polarization caused by gender culture, these behaviors are not inherent but organized. Through historical events, this binary representation of gender has become a key factor for people to replicate male or female gender behavior. Butler believes that when a genre is related to the way of perception, there is a room for various repetitive actions, which can lead to the development of another genre. As Butler states: “In [acts’] very character as performative resides the possibility of contesting [their] reified status” (520 as qtd. in Van Kesteren 8). However, this has certain limitations, and this is an important part of Butler's reasoning-the whole concept of social sanctions and taboos. According to gender duality and social pressure to act in accordance with male or female behavior, any violation of norms will be punished. In the last paragraph of her essay, a quote highlights what precisely Butler means by gender performativity theory:

Gender is not passively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy. Gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure, but if this continuous act is mistaken for a natural or linguistic given, power is relinquished to expand the cultural field bodily through subversive performance of various kinds. (Butler 531 as qtd. in Van Kesteren 9)



Therefore, this statement shows that the recognition of gender as a natural phenomenon related to a person's biological gender is different from the recognition of gender as a concept derived from cultural and historical ideals. It means that to be strengthened through gender-specific behaviors. Gender is a structured reality, greatly influenced by history and cultural traditions. People copy and fulfill gender roles. However, once someone rejects these gender roles, they will be punished for not complying with certain cultural norms.

Butler's theory of gender performativity focuses on the fact that gender is not produced biologically, but it is a structure influenced by social constraints and historical conventions. Sandra Bem, *In The Lenses of Gender: Transforming the Debate on Sexual inequality* (1993), analyzes this perceived gender-specific performance by cultivating her own lenses theory. This theory means the lens that affect daily gender experience, namely the following three lenses; androcentrism, gender polarization, and biological essentialism. Bem believes that the culture of any society contains information about how the world works and how members of society should see and act. The lens theory assumes that the culture within the society realizes people with different thoughts and behavior principles, and these three are acceptable, which are rooted in social values and structures.

For Bem, the concept of androcentrism is based on the fact that people are seen as the center of the universe, as she said: "[men] looking out at reality from their own eyes and describing what they see from an egocentric - or androcentric- point of view " (42). Therefore, the female experience is an experience that deviates from what men think of reality and drives women to another position. The following lens is gender polarization, which means that men and women in society are not only fundamentally different from each other, but these differences are also the main organizing principles of social life in society (2). In her chapter on gender polarization, she pointed out that when the lens of androcentrism and bio-essentialism is removed, only gender differences are preserved (81). Even if the other two

lenses are ineffective, the feminine principle still occupies almost all of the experience (81). This subdivision includes not only how men and women should dress differently or how they should act in accordance with certain gender roles, but also include sexual desire and emotional expression. For Bem, this lens has two functions: first, it determines “mutually exclusive scripts for being male and female” (81 as qtd. in Kesteren 18); second: “any person or behaviour that deviates from these scripts as problematic” (Bem 81 as qtd. in Kesteren 18). The Combination of the two lenses creates and summarizes the “gender-polarizing link between the sex of one’s body and the character of one’s psyche and one’s sexuality (81).

The final lens is biological essentialism, whose role is to rationalize and legitimize the first two and portray them as natural and inevitable products of the inherent natural differences between the two sexes (2). Among the three shots, this shot is the closest to sociobiology. In this case, gender inequality is based on gender characteristics that are considered hereditary and contribute to certain gender characteristics. Examples of these characteristics are the aggressiveness of men and the emotionality of women. According to Bem, sociobiologists associate men with "sexual promiscuity", rape, abandonment of partners and children, aggression between men, tolerance of female infidelity, kidnapping of women, murder of stepson, and the universal men rule (17-18) , while they connect women with “the holding back of sex, the careful selection of sexual partners, the investment of time and energy in parental care, the preference of at least serial monogamy, and the deceiving of males with respect to paternity” (18). These examples of differences between men and women given by social biologists clearly show the difference between active and passive where All male characteristics represent the male self, while female characteristics always include other characteristics. Essentialism is based on the concept that men and women are biologically different, and each gender has certain characteristics: men are active and women are passive.

### **II.3. Humanism and Ursula Le Guin**

Humanism is the rejection of any power or ethical value supreme than human beings; rejecting religious support to believe in human progress through its own efforts. According to Collins humanism is “the rejection of religion in favor of the advancement of humanity by its own efforts” (as qtd. in Victor). It is an ideological system which believes that solving ideological human problems is more important than religious belief. This emphasizes the fact that basic human nature is good with the belief in and pay attention to people and their values, opportunities and values. Humanism is the denial of any power or moral value other than human beings; abandoning religion and advocating believing in human progress through one's own efforts. Humanism can be defined as philosophy and lifestyle based on sympathy, realization and practice.

For humanists, sympathy is the beginning of compassion and social behavior, which is a product of human nature: the belief that humans are extremely advanced 'social animals'. Reason is the product of human thought, and scientific methods can be derived by combining experience. Humanists believe that the scientific method is the only credible material for the acquisition and the verification of knowledge needed to achieve scientific goals (Mitcham, 2011 as qtd. in Victor). Generally speaking, a humanist is a person who believes in the well-being of all people, regardless of rank, faith, policy religion, or nationalist barriers. Humanists seem to insist on applying their ideas to all problems. In life, do not rely on beliefs or intuitions, nor are they under the guidance of tradition or authority without rational verification. However, in the history of philosophy, the meaning of the term "humanism" seems to be completely different. With the help of those who think that it is only rational, philosophical knowledge can be brought to us without observation, and this is true knowledge (Bandiste, 2011 as qtd. in Victor).

Contrary to humanist philosophers, empiricist philosophers urged that observing or experiencing events is the ground of knowledge. The two main principles of modern humanism seem to be the belief in the ability of thinking to solve problems and the recognition of the legitimacy of experience, as a method to guide and assess all rational thinking. Compared with all other creatures and animals, only humans have the power of thinking. In short, a humanist seems to be a person who defends and practices humanistic values in which humanists think that human experience is the root of all moral knowledge and values. The single knowledge we can obtain is human knowledge. For humanitarians, knowledge and beliefs will never be final, but it should always be limited, vague and open. It seems that humanitarians are always open-minded, ready to question and criticize their views and beliefs at any time. Humanists seem to be positively paying attention to the well-being of the people in this world, contrary to the posthumous assumption of existence. Believing in the equality of human beings, humanitarians seem to insist on social justice and oppose all human obstacles between people based on skin color, beliefs or birth conditions, and its relationship with peers (Hornby, 2011 as qtd. in Victor).

Ursula K. Le Guin is one of the authors who introduced conflicting creatures in several of her important novels. Although they do not exist, they are human in appearance and behavior. When Le Guin uses the term "other" in her own work, she means something other than the ordinary alien telepathic robot Superman. Compared with other writers, the differences between her other people are often smaller. They consciously believe that in Le Guin's works, important differences between other people are replaced by substantial similarities. Two of Le Guin's novels are absolutely authoritative even among readers who are not usually interested in science fiction. They are *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed* (1974). In these novels, Le Guin continues the approach as she introduced in the introduction to *Rocannon's World* (1966), in which she describes herself as a science fiction

writer. The result is very rare in science fiction; the point is that a culture is not enough to guarantee the science of Le Guin's character discovering her own strange situation. Perhaps because of this cultural emphasis, Ursula's question of human nature is as profound as any other science fiction novel.

## **Chapter Two: *The Left Hand of Darkness* as a Postmodern Science Fiction**

This chapter aims at analyzing *The Left Hand of Darkness* as a postmodern narrative in which it examines the characteristics of postmodern science fiction which are the fragmentation of narration, deconstruction of gender and the technology in the narrative. The first section deals with fragmentation of narration as narrative technique in the novel. The second section deals with Ursula le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* in which she uses real aspects that are the humanistic characteristics through the usage of science fiction in order to create a new vision of humans as well as a world that is different from ours. Her work deeply relies on imagination in which she offers a fictional space that is full of technology such as the androgynous human-like creatures, their Kemmer period in which they can choose to become a man or woman, and their new means of communication which is telepathy that was used by Genly Ai and Estraven. The writer's creativity indicates her belief about the future that would be full of technology and which has positive effects on humanity. The third section examines the Deconstruction of gender. It deals with the distinction between sex and gender from two different perspectives, the first one is from a human society point of view while the other is the new gender that was created by Ursula K. Le Guin. In this regard, she eliminated gender to show that these gender binaries are the main cause of all issues in society.

## I .The Narrative Technique in *The Left Hand of Darkness*

Le Guin's created a new universe known as the Hainish universe. Humans on this universe are scattered in a distant past that most races cannot remember. The Hainish is a race that claims to be the root of all mankind; however, other races doubt it, since their history is not complete. In most of Le Guin's works, she questions whether all these creatures are really the same race. One of her examples is Rolery and Jakob that are races living on *Planet of Exile*. They lived together by side for 600 years, but no one of them is sure whether the other is human; only when they need to fight together. However, in Le Guin's other novels, the differences are not so apparent. Falk is a descendant of Jacob and a Rolery of the *City of Illusions*, except that his eyes are like cats, he is human in every aspect. In *Rocannon's world* and *Word for world is Forest*, huge cultural differences make people doubt the humanity of various humanoid races (Hull 69).

However, the biggest difference between humans and humans-like is in *The Left Hand of Darkness*. On the planet of Gethen, the race living there is androgynous; humans have male and female genitalia, and can be pregnant. Unlike humans who are not always able to engage in sexual relations; on the contrary, they are like animals, which are often sexually active. Obviously, these people can be defined as non-human due to their sexual features. According to Le Guin in her work we are the only mammals in the world who are sexually prepared. Le Guin's works risk causing controversy and sentimentality on the subject, but her best works make good use of it. *The Word for World is Forest* (1972) is explicit and adequate; But *The Left Hand of Darkness* has so deeply integrated its lessons into Gethenian's culture, biology, and geography that major subjects are too rich to be sentimental, no matter how much it rises. *The Dispossessed* completely abolishes the dangers of sentimentality and justice; it does not show that human beings are a broader concept than we think, but instead deals with traditional work by paying attention to what human beings are (Hull 69-70).

*The Left Hand of Darkness* is a very famous science fiction novel that received a great popularity and the year after it won the year's best novel in Nebula and Hugo Awards. Le Guin is considered as a versatile writer who writes in different genres such as science fiction, philosophical essays or fantasy. In all her works, there is an immediate demand for acceptance and tolerance for each other by all intellectual individuals; regardless of how unpleasant their looks, traditions, or beliefs look at first glance. So, the novel is about that ideal of accepting and understanding that any creature on the earth, even the most weird and most inexplicable carries an endless pain and a sensitive soul. And then you will be able to take that being as a set of beliefs, features, traditions and responses (Marchyn, para.1-3).

Ursula Le Guin in her introduction that was added to the novel in 1976 stated that her fiction is not extrapolative which means taking a trend from the present time and expanding it to the future. Instead she considers her novels as a thought-experiment whose main purpose is to comment upon reality or to describe the present and it does not predict the future. So, she tries to change something in the present and sees the results (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 2-4). Le Guin in her essay "Is Gender Necessary?" (1976) explained that she is making a thought experiment to discover how a society would be without gender; in which she created different characters, events and places that did not exist before so as not to make something new but to figure out the real differences that exist between men and women which are the results of the conditions of the society.

*The left Hand of Darkness* is a part of the Hainish Cycle that was created as an alternative world that is completely different from ours in terms of environment and gender. It is a series of connected novels and short stories. It takes place in the year 4870 which is a technological and imaginative setting; the novel is about an envoy that was sent to a planet named winter or Gethen as its people call it and it is composed of two nations Karhide and Orgoreyn. The envoy Genly Ai is an alien from Terra who was sent to convince the



inhabitants to be part of the Ekumen which is a league of eighty-three worlds collected together. The planet winter, as its name indicates is always cold, so Le Guin created an icy different environment from that of Earth to see the effects of environment on human's life. Moreover, the gender of its citizens is not known, and they are neither males nor females, their physical appearance is different than Terrans in which they have 'fine thick hair-thatch', 'downward eye-slant' and 'prominent and narrow noses with constricted passages, well adapted to breathing subfreezing air' (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 30). Gethenians have a sexual cycle of 26 days during which they develop either male or female sexual urges in which they may have a sexual relation; this period is known as Kemmer which lasts from two to five days. These conditions affected the way in which civilization on the planet has developed, and the most significant results were that there was never a war, no rape, no racism or inequality between people on this planet. There were other mysterious rules for diplomacy and politics that the envoy should learn to live since their culture and his culture are almost different. All these differences faced Ai who struggled to understand how the people on the planet survived and at the same time provided Le Guin with a great chance to understand and explore how life would be without dualities.

In the beginning Genly Ai landed on the planet by himself on the nation of Karhide where he spent two years trying to fulfill his mission. The first event was when Genly Ai supposed to meet the king of karhide Argaven Harge with the help of karhide's prime minister the Gethenian politician named Therem Harth rem ir Estraven. At first Estraven seemed to believe in Ai's mission. However, the night before the meeting with the king Estraven told Ai that he cannot support him anymore, and as a result Ai lost his trust in Estraven. Ai and Estraven could not communicate because of the different cultural backgrounds this highlights an important idea that understanding each other depends on accepting each other's differences, different cultural values, different way of living and

accepting that these differences are important in our lives. The day of the meeting Ai knows that Estraven was accused of treason and exiled because he was in favor of the Ekumen, and the king rejects his invitation to join the confederation.

After Estraven was exiled he had to leave the nation quickly and run to Orgoreyn borders. He lost his identification and became a factory worker until Orgoreyn politicians and commensals discovered him. After the rejection of the invitation by Ekumen, Genly Ai decided to go to Orgoreyn to convince them to join the confederation. What he is going to face is a different world, in Orgoreyn it is a bureaucracy, their religion known as Yomesh that comes from Karhide's religion Handdara. Moreover, the people of Orgoreyn live with the darkness of secret police, less human values and many prisons under the form of concentration camps. Estraven tries to warn Genly Ai not to trust the politicians and political system of this nation. However, Ai did not listen to him until he was betrayed, arrested and taken to Kundershaden Prison. Even though Estraven was doing his best to show his loyalty to Genly, the latter still does not trust him only because he could not accept his androgynous nature. And this is because of the rooted cultural values in Ai's Terran society. Le Guin is trying to show us how humans are affected with how they were raised and what they learned, she also emphasizes that they cannot easily accept people who are different from them.

On this concentration camp, he was freezing and working in hard labour waiting for his death; until he was rescued by Estraven. Both of them faced ice, cold, snow and glaciers in their return to Karhide, to retry convincing Karhide to join the Ekumen. Estraven believes Karhide will accept to join to the confederation to take the honor before Orgoreyn. It was a journey of 80 days, during which both Ai and Estraven learned how to trust each other and accept their differences. When Ai started to open his mind towards accepting differences he could communicate and trust Estraven. So, humans should learn to be tolerant towards anything that is different and new from them and their culture. Ai succeeds in teaching

Estraven telepathy or mindspeak, and Estraven hears Ai's voice in his head but as the voice of his dead brother Arek. Genly Ai starts to understand his friend well especially when Estraven goes into kemmer, they both avoid sexual relationship however, Ai could see the womanly side of his friend and as a result he understands the androgynous nature of the inhabitants of Gethen. Once they reached Karhide, Estraven was discovered because he was still known as a traitor and he was shot by the guard of the borders and died in Ai's hands asking him to clear his name. Finally, Ai successfully convinces Karhide's king to join the confederation but he did not clear his friend's name because he did not want to endanger his mission.

*The Left Hand of Darkness* is a postmodern masterpiece; its form and content are completely different than previous works. It was narrated through different narrative voices or point of views, so it has no narrative center. The novel is composed of 20 chapters through which she sets two different narrators who tell the story interchangeably, and never fixes a certain chapter to a certain narrator, sometimes the two individual narrators share one chapter narration, and in other occasions they provide an individual version of their telling. Therefore, most readers mix between the narrations and cannot decide who the true teller of the chapter is. It is a peculiar postmodern technique that makes science fiction genre more complicated and difficult to read.

The first chapter started with Genly Ai's narration that covers the biggest portion of the story. In which he describes the setting of the capital city of Karhide Erhenrang and its inhabitants, then Genly proceeds with his experience with Karhide's king Argaven. After that Le Guin shifted the narration to Gethenian point of view that is told by Estraven. For example, chapter six entitled 'One Way into Orgoreyn' describes Estraven's journey to Orgoreyn after he was exiled from Karhide whereas chapter eight entitled 'Another way into

Orgoreyn' describes Genly's journey to the same nation Orgoreyn through his own point of view.

The first narrator is the diplomat who was sent by the Ekumen to convince Gethenians to join the confederation, Genly Ai and the second one is by the Gethenian Estraven. Moreover, other chapters are narrated by Ekumenical Investigators, some talk about myths, religious texts and folktales to help readers understand the Gethenian culture, this technique shows that each person provides his own version of events and truth. Some chapters that present Gethenian myths usually precedes chapters that introduce Ai's experience with a similar situation for example chapter four which is entitled 'The Nineteenth Day' that narrates a story about the Foretellers is presented before Ai's visit to them in chapter five entitled 'The Domestication of Hunch' to make the events clear so that the reader will understand. Le Guin in *The Left Hand of Darkness* stated that truth is a matter of the imagination. So she clearly stated that she used imagination in her novel. This is also clear in Ai's words in the first chapter: "I'll make my report as if I told a story, for I was taught as a child...that Truth is a matter of the imagination" (5). He clarifies that each of the narratives contains fictional ideas. Ai also states that the story is not all told by him, and that there are other voices helped him in its narration. He said: "The story is not all mine, nor told by me alone. Indeed I am not sure whose story it is; you can judge better. But it is all one, and if at moments the facts seem to alter with an altered voice, why then you can choose the fact you like best; yet none of them are false, and it is all one story"(5). Here he emphasized clearly on the idea that all the voices own the story together and that all of them are true, yet it is considered all as one story.

In *The Left Hand of Darkness* six chapters do not tell the story however, they provide more ideas about the culture, traditions and history of Gethen to make the events clear. It is the essence of Postmodern science fiction in which various genres of writings can be fused in the same literary work, *The Left Hand of Darkness* is a rich narrative which employs mythical

chapters based on traditional stories, detective chapters on the part of Genly Ai and mainly technological chapters which tell about the creation of new planets, new creature and new temporalities to highlight the technological core of Ursula Le Guin's book. For example, chapter two entitled 'The Place Inside the Blizzard' taken from a North Karhidish "hearthtales" and it talks about their cultural norms towards suicide. For them the act of suicide is forbidden and shameful. Another example is chapter seven entitled 'The Question of Sex', which is taken from field notes of Ong Tot Oppong, Investigator, of the first Ekumenical landing party on Gethen. It provides a clear idea about the Gethenian's behavior and biology. It discusses the influence of gender roles and distinctions on their culture, customs and social life. In *The Left Hand of Darkness* time is not specified. In chapter 12 'On Time and Darkness', Gethenians stated "there is neither source nor end, for all things are in the Center of Time" (82), so their calendar is always with the current year, it is always the year one and as it is stated in their creation myth in chapter 17 entitled 'An Orgotta Creation Myth' "they are in the middle of time" (117). It can be said that from their creation they focus only on the present. In their creation myth the beginning of their world started with sun and ice without the existence of shadow. And at the end the sun will eventually consume itself, and shadow will consume light, leaving nothing but ice and darkness.

Ai and Estraven's versions of truth and events are different because each of them has a different view of life and truth. Also, since each one of them belongs to different culture and society the events will be understood differently from both narrators point of views. For example, in the beginning when we read the novel from Ai's perspective we understand that Estraven is not loyal and he is not trustful; however, if we take it from Estraven's point of view we will see how he was loyal and how he tried to help Genly, and how Genly did not trust him. So what can we understand here is that using a multiple narrative voices provides a full picture of the truth and reality of the Gethenian people. Reading the novel only from Ai's

perspective do not provide a full knowledge and understanding of this race, but it is when reading the story from the eyes of a Gethenian voice and with the contribution of their myths and legends that we really form the full picture. This is because an outsider whose view about gender distinctions is different from the inhabitants of this planet will not describe the real nature of these people yet he will describe them through his own eyes.

## **II. The Essence of Technology in Postmodern Science Fiction *The Left Hand of Darkness***

Technology in this novel shows two forms, that of the human race shown through the Terran Genly Ai. His race developed new technological concepts and devices such as telepathy or mind speech, time jumping, spaceships and the ansible communicator to facilitate their life. The extraterrestrial Gethenian race in the other side developed their own version of technology including cars, radios and they created an economical central-heating device through using steam, electricity and other principles. So despite this race is technologically late in comparison with the humans, they developed their own way of survival based on the available resources on their planet. Both sides came into union by the end of the story when king Argaven of the Gethenian race accepted to join the Ekumen; as a result, their technological development will be united for the sake of human essence.

A part of Le Guin's greatness as a writer is seen in her use of imagination with the assistance of technology which allowed her to create a completely different world and her ability to imagine how that world would be with its smallest details including characters, sex, and personal relationships. In this novel, the author tried to innovate new concepts in terms of the characters themselves who are the result of a unique sexuality vision. Despite the creative sexual nature of the Gethenians, Le Guin was successful to maintain the humanistic characteristics in a planet full of unusual ideas. Starting with an environment in which there is

always winter, cold, and ice so that it can suits people's nature that are androgynous to creating a new means of communication which is known as telepathy and modern means of transportation which is time-travel or time-jumping.

*The Left Hand of Darkness* is a low technology Science Fiction novel in which the Gethenian people themselves never had the desire to deal with technology. However, the technological setting of the novel paves the way for more developed views about Humanity in which technology is no more a threat to the human nature. As a result, characters challenged their own technological setting through developing human characteristics that were clear in the Karhidish Prime Minister Estraven's relationship with the Terran Genly Ai. Estraven who is a Gethenian Human-like character revealed the real essence of humanism since he can be considered as a brave, honest and helpful person to his friend Ai. He eventually tried to help him from the beginning of the novel to accomplish his mission for which he was sent to the planet of Gethen, by trying to arrange a meeting with king Argaven so that he can convince him to join the Ekumen. The latter is known as a league of eighty-three worlds collected together.

The use of technology dominated people's life in Terra to a large extent and reached a dangerous turn in which it is no more used in a positive way. Despite it was human creation, it was used as a weapon against humanity in terms of manipulating people's minds, and creating developed weapons to start wars and kill innocent people. Although Gethen and its inhabitants are science fictional creation, technology neither dominated their social life nor manipulated their mind. As Le Guin stated in the novel "Timejumping is a function of traveling nearly as fast as light. If I simply turned around and came back, my few hours spent on the ship would, here, amount to thirty-four years" (22). This quote highlights the idea of time which is different from one planet to the other in which Ai tried to explain to king Argaven that he has the ability to be present with other generations in a distinct world since

he does not have a fixed age. Genly presented the idea of the 'The ansible communicator' which works through sending messages to any two points at the same time and any place. One of the points should be fixed in a planet while the other is portable so Ai explained that if he writes a message in the keyboard of the ansible, it would be received in Hain at the same moment. Whereas, travelling by a NAFAL ship between Gethen and Hain takes 67 years.

As we proceed with the events, Genly asked the king if he has any idea or message to deliver to Hain in which the king provided a question and when the Hainish people answered his question he claimed that he could have this answer from any foreteller. So Genly Ai's trials to convince the king through the technological development of the Ekumen are failed since Agraven showed that he does not care about technology as he stated: "Mr. Ai. Nor is your box, your machine there. Nor your vehicle, your ship, A bag of tricks and a trickster... We want nothing from them. We've chosen our way of life and have followed it for a long time. Karhide's on the brink of a new epoch, a great new age. We'll go our own way" (23). So Argaven highlighted that technology is not important when he refused all the technological development Genly showed him in which he preferred to follow their own way of life.

In order to discover what really differentiate men and women and whether these gender binaries led to the emergence of many conflicts in the society, Le Guin's work was successful to depict a society where there is no division, no superiority and inferiority, no strong and weak and no dominant and submissive and therefore, there were no rape, no war, no treason, and no family problems. Estraven who is a human-like character is the main sign that technology is no more a threat to humanity. Although he is a technological creature who is supposed to be without feelings and emotions, he was able to develop humanistic action including love, friendship, loyalty and sacrifice that he showed through the course of the events. The first thing was when he believed in Genly's mission despite being an outsider and he tried to help him to fulfil his mission. Another example when he gave up on his shifgrethor



code to steal money in order to buy supplies in order to go back to Kahride. And the last example is when he sacrificed his life in Orgoreyn in order to save Genly Ai from the prison, here once more Le Guin tried to emphasize the idea that technology does not any more eliminate humanism instead human qualities existed in the technological created character.

Le Guin in her novel *The Left Hand of Darkness* did not only create a completely new race that is different from ours, but she has also made a new distinct environment so that it suits the Gethenians' physiology. This planet is in the middle of an ice age in which the weather is always cold, freezing, and where snow exists everywhere; this was not clear from the beginning of the story until Genly and Estraven started their journey across the glaciers as it was described in the novel in chapter 15 which is entitled 'To the ice'. This environment is considered as the main factor that influenced the Gethenian life and society as Le Guin stated in the novel "And in the end, the dominant factor in Gethenian life is not sex or any other human thing: it is their environment, their cold world. Here man has a crueler enemy even than himself" (50). As a result, these people focused most of their energies to survive in these harsh conditions in which they developed slowly; they did not achieve in 30 centuries what Terra once achieved in 30 decades (51). As the Chinese assistant professor Zhang stated in her work that the Gerthenians sexual nature is made to preserve energy in order to cope with the cold weather of their planet (395). This means that they developed their own ways to cope with the capacities of their own world since they do not think about the future; however, their main concern was focusing on their presence.

Another important technological invention in the novel is the use of telepathy or as it is known as mindspeech which is a way of communication that is sent and received voluntarily. This process requires telling the truth and telling no lies which is not easy to achieve especially when the individual is not used to it. Stephenson argued in his work that: "With the lack of consummation between them, Genly feels that mindspeech is the "only thing [he] had

to give Estraven” in order to cement the bond between the two“(26). As Genly and Estraven struggled to make this communication together for several times until they finally succeeded in doing so. This new technological means of communication helped Genly Ai to understand both the Gethenian nature and Estraven’s intention and to communicate with the Gethenians in which it paved the way for him to fulfill his mission. As stated by Zhang that the communicative bond was not initiated until Genly and Estraven achieved a shared recognition of each other’s culture through the use of mind speech (398). Le Guin through all these events proved that technology is no more a threat for the existence of humanity; however it is only used as a means to facilitate the Gethenians’ life.

### **III. The Deconstruction of Gender in the Novel**

On Earth, the concept of sex and gender are completely different from each other. Sex is defined according to the biological characteristic in which individuals are differentiated based on their physical appearance. However, gender is seen as the social and cultural construct which is based on how you perceive yourself as a man or a woman. These gender binaries created various severe problems in the society in which the main issue was the superiority of men over women that was deeply rooted in the culture of the community for a long period of time. As a result, the roles of women were already defined in terms of house-keeping, pregnancy and child-bearing and even in jobs. These social roles highly influenced and controlled women’s freedom in the working domain, whereas, they provided men with more freedom and importance in all the fields without judgment. All these stereotypes were eliminated in Le Guin’s work *The Left Hand of Darkness* through creating a full new race that is completely different from humans in terms of gender, in which these inhabitants have no fixed sex except once a month as she stated: “Yes. Gethenian sexual physiology, so far as we yet know, is unique among human beings” (21).

The sexual and gender binaries of Gethenians was clearly explained in chapter seven entitled 'The Question of Sex' that was taken from field notes of Ong Tot Oppong, Investigator, of the first Ekumenical landing party on Gethen. In this chapter the investigator reveals that this new race is the result of the Hainish colonizers experiment. He provided all the explanation about this race in terms of their sexual nature, their way of living and their kemmer which is the dominant factor that affects all the aspects of Gethenians life. As stated in the novel: "The structure of their societies, the management of their industry, agriculture, commerce, the size of their settlements, the subjects of their stories, everything is shaped to fit the somer-kemmer cycle. Everybody has his holiday once a month; no one, whatever his position, is obliged or forced to work when in kemmer "(49).

This sexual cycle or Kemmer lasts from 26 to 28 days and it has three main phases. The individual from the first to the 22nd day is in his androgynous nature which is known as somer. In the first phase known as 'Karh.secher' the Gethenian remains in his androgynous nature. During this period a Gethenian remains sexually inactive even if he is with others. Yet the sexual motivation is very powerful. The second phase of Kemmer known as 'Karh.thorharmen' occurs from two to twenty hours that is a mutual process of building sexuality and potency. Here if one of the partners is already in full Kemmer the phase of the new partner will be shorter however if both of them are entering Kemmer together the phase will take more time. Moreover, in this period the partners neither know which sex they will possess nor they have a chance to choose and once the sex is fixed it cannot be changed during Kemmer. The third phase known as the Karh.thokemmer or the culminate phase lasts from two to five days, during which the sexual ability reaches its climax and during which the sexual relation takes place. In this relation, if one of the partners is pregnant 'he' keeps the female physical appearance and female hormones until he gives birth to the child however the other partner returns to somer within few hours.

The theme of love is present in the novel between Estraven and Genly Ai but in a new form. Their definition of love did not ask for their reunification or for sexual relation as Lapointe discussed: “Although Estraven and Ai never have a sexual relationship, their close friendship troubles Ai because it challenges his culture’s prohibition on same-sex intimacy” (para. 9). However, it was achieved through mutual understanding and acceptance despite their own differences. As le Guin highlighted: “But it was from the difference between us, not from the affinities and likenesses, but from the difference that love came” (121).

### **Chapter Three: The Humanistic and Androgynous Representations in *The Left Hand of Darkness***

This chapter aims at analyzing Ursula K. Le Guin's novel *The Left Hand of Darkness* according to the humanistic perspective in relation to the androgynous representation in the novel. It includes two sections, the first one deal with Humanism in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, through highlighting its essential characteristics. In this regard, Ursula K. Le Guin uses different humanistic features to represent her characters and to prepare her readers to a new vision of the world. Moreover, she makes use of two different points of view which leads the readers to be more analytical towards the events of the novel.

The second section portrays Le Guin's theory of Androgyny which deals with characters who are ambisexual through creating different worlds, religion, sex, and ideologies where the protagonist goes in a long trip throughout the story. The author uses diverse imaginary aspects in the novel through introducing a new image to sex and gender which is the concept of Androgyny in order to play on the nerve of humanity in the work, and to inspire and motivate not only the writers but also the readers to welcome these unusual ideas.

## I. The Humanistic Representation in the Novel

*The Left Hand of Darkness* is a very famous American postmodern science fiction novel that tackles different angles of life. Especially with the dominance of technology in the world, humanity was the main concern of researchers and the investigation of postmodern scholars, linguists, writers and critics. In the center of this technological confusion, the first hints that have led to the emergence of Humanism were supported by ethnographic studies. Moreover, human representation has overburden postmodern science fiction works. One of today's most acclaimed and widely read science fiction authors have made the challenge of defining humanity as a central topic in her writing. In several of her main works, Ursula K. Le Guin brings into conflict people who are based on physical appearance and attitude; appear to be human although there is some aspect present that causes uncertainty or, a misleading reality.

Part of Le Guin's greatness as a writer depends on the fact that she often asks basic questions and then does not give simple answers. In fact, she might not answer at all. There are some answers to whether the Gethenians are considered as human, but there is not exact answer of yes or no. Hainish and Gethenians' protagonists in Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* solved the problem of Gethenians' human nature in which they ignored all cultural and biological barriers and became loyal and respectful friends. The novel's most important lesson is that human beings are a broader and deeper entity than we usually imagine, and the definition of human beings needs to be continuously expanded as our experience increases.

The bisexual nature of Gethenians has a profound influence on their worldview and behavior. In a world full of potential, one can become a man or a woman in any 26-day cycle in the Gethenian culture known as Kemmer. Human beings will not be divided into two rigid halves; superior and inferior, strong and weak, dominant and the submissive, active and passive. As Le Guin explained: "there is no division of humanity into strong and weak halves,

protective/ protected, dominant/ submissive, owner/ chattel, active/ passive. In fact the whole tendency to dualism that pervades human thinking may be found to be lessened, or changed, on Winter.” (Le Guin 49), as a result the individual, social and ecological levels of exploitation seem to be declining sharply. Le Guin did not attribute these huge differences solely to physiology, in which her characters show that poor conditions also play an important role in shaping Gethenian society and worldview: “And in the end, the dominant factor in Gethenian life is not sex or any other human thing: it is their environment, their cold world. Here man has a crueler enemy even than himself” (Le Guin 51). With much energy consumed on survival in a marginalized world, the Gethenians have progressed slowly; they did not experience the industrial revolution. However, their lateness and wariness provide certain advantages. Gethenians found a way to live within the carrying capacity of their world. For more than thousand years, the world’s population has remained stable. They used hundreds of years of sustainable management practices to manage their forests. Many technologies introduced in history emphasize economy, durability and functionality: portable stove/heater/lights that can be used continuously for 14 months; polymer-coated sleds that almost completely reduce resistance; achieve the best performance in deep snow architecture.

The characteristics which should be found in a human being were not evident in Genly Ai who is supposed to act according to his humanistic essence in his relationship with Estraven. However, the humanistic features were found in Estraven who is a human-like and despite his difference with Genly Ai because of his sexual nature, he was able to show his loyalty, love, and friendship to Genly Ai. This was clear from the beginning of the story when Estraven tried to help Genly Ai in his mission which is to convince the king Argaven to join the Ekumen. Even though, Genly Ai and Estraven had a long time together in which Estraven tried to show him his loyalty, friendship, love and support, their relationship went through a series of misunderstanding since Ai did not trust him because of Estraven’s absence of a true

sex as well as because of his own inability to understand their sexual nature as Genly stated in the novel:

[Estraven] was the only one who had entirely accepted me as a human being: who had liked me personally and given me entire personal loyalty: and who therefore had demanded of me an equal degree of recognition, of acceptance. I had not been willing to give. I had not wanted to give my trust, my friendship to man who was a woman, a woman who was a man. (Le Guin 121)

Through the course of the events, Estraven was accused of treason where he found himself obliged to escape Karhide a night before the meeting with the king that enhanced Ai's mistrust in Estraven, during Genly's speech with the king; he tried to impress him with the technological developments so that he joins the Ekumen. However, he rejects his invitation in which he said, "Answers aren't enough, Mr. Ai. Nor is your box, your machine there. Nor your vehicle, your ship... . We've chosen our way of life and have followed it for a long time" (Le Guin 23). Genly felt that his mission is in danger and in order to rescue his life, he decided to flee Karhide where he received an invitation to try his chance in another land that is completely different from Karhide which is the bureaucratic Orgoreyn. Moreover, the people of Orgoreyn live the darkness of the secret police, less human values, and many prisons under the form of concentration camps.

Ai was welcomed and greeted warmly by the Orgoreyn commensals where he received a comfortable and good treatment than he received in Karhide. These politicians communicated with him easily and on more open manner, some of them already support his mission that was told by Estraven. All these positive events led Genly Ai to build a strong relationship and trust the Orgoreyn politicians. Even though, Genly Ai was accepted by the new nation, he was warned by Estraven not to trust them in which he realized that they do not



care about his mission pretty much like Karhiders. However, Ai again did not trust Estraven's claim; as a result, he was arrested and sent to Kundershaden prison where he was anesthetized, questioned, freezing, and working in hard labour waiting for his death. Estraven did not give up on Ai in which he went through a long road journey where he saved him from the prison, then Estraven spent his money to buy supplies and he even stole to prepare for their return trip to Karhide.

During the 80-day journey across the glaciers of Gethen Estraven and the Terran Genly Ai; Only in this isolation, the envoy understands the nature of his friend Estraven in which they built an emotional bond. The latter is established through two steps: the first one deals with Estraven's entry into Kemmer which is a period where they choose to become either a man or a woman, while the second one is their communication through telepathy. During the whole trip there was a fear of sexual relationship that reaches its climax the night when Estraven enters into Kemmer. At that night, Ai was confused by the acts of his friend however later he discovered what was going on, in which he rejected Estraven's reality and then he confessed the sexual clash between them. It is important to highlight that the reason behind their bond comes from the difference between them not the similarities from which love has appeared "But it was from the difference between us, not from the affinities and likenesses, but from the difference, that love came: and it was itself the bridge, the only bridge, across what divided us" (Le Guin 121). Love here does not only denote how deep the connection is or to what extent does one know the other as one might assume, however, it is to recognize an extreme inequality and despair which is a surprising element in a novel that largely deals with sex. However, their sexual relationship has been accomplished through telepathy, this not only replaces actual sexual intercourse, but also means a more intimate relationship "that intimacy of mind established between us was a bond" (Le Guin 124). The sexual relation of their mindspeaking has been enriched when Estraven heard his dead

brother's voice and his beloved Arek instead of Genely's voice. While crossing the border, Estraven was shot to death by the guards but Genly Ai neither cleared his friend's name nor confessed his love to Estraven because he did not want to put his mission in danger in which Genly's attitude towards Estraven has shifted from ignorance to acceptance when he finally realized that Estraven was a loyal person who tried to help him through his experience.

Another important component of Humanism that was manifested in the novel is Motherhood on which Kayla Stephenson highlighted that women and motherhood have one of the greatest gender connotations, yet Le Guin created a place in *The Left Hand of Darkness* where the mother is always a woman, but a woman is not necessarily a mother (17) as an example from the novel when the king Argeven was pregnant who will be the mother of the child. This conception can occur just once a month, when two people on the planet Winter undergo an important reproductive cycle in which they are given a gender. And while the gender assignment is randomized, there is always a man and a woman in each pair. As a result, if the female half of the partnership becomes pregnant during this period, she is obliged to maintain her outward female look until birth, whilst the male instantly reverts to his default androgynous form at completion of Kemmer. However, anyone in the society has the potential to be a woman and give birth to a child. Despite the novel's efforts to detach the concept of motherhood from the concept of the feminine gender and giving birth, most of the language continues to impose this link, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Nonetheless, the novel maintains conventional gendered pregnant duties in a sex-linked manner. Even within kemmer and their sexually awakening, they are characterized as having an almost pregnancy-like brightness. Genly is capable of identifying someone in Kemmer by "subtle physical intensification, a kind of brightness, that signalizes the first phase of Kemmer" (Le Guin 34).

Le Guin is very creative and brilliant science fiction writer who married between technological development and the existence of human characteristics that was manifested in her technological human-like character the Gethenian Estraven. During the course of the story, the human essence was evident in the human-like Estraven who showed his real feeling and emotions in his relationship with the human Terran Genly Ai. Since the beginning of the story there were various signs that highlighted humanism, it is clear that Estraven's humanistic features were obvious in which he was the only one who accepted Genly Ai despite all the differences between them, and who showed his good intentions through arranging a meeting with the king this was the first sign. The second sign was when Estraven was exiled to Orgoreyn where he introduced Ai's mission to the commensals known as Orgota league in which he received an invitation to fulfill his mission. The following sign was when Estraven warned Genly not to trust the officials of Orgoreyn and when he put his life in danger in order to save him from the prison then when he bought supplies and stole to help them in their turning journey to Karhide so Estraven not only sacrifices his life but also he broke shifgrethor, "shifgrethor—prestige, face, place, the pride-relationship, the untranslatable and all-important principle of social authority in Karhide and all civilizations of Gethen" (Le Guin 10). The last sign is when they reached the borders of Karhide, Estraven was shot by the guard and fell dead in his friend's hands asking him to clear his name but Ai did not do it because he did not want to jeopardize his mission. From the previous mentioned signs, it can be understood that the technological character reveals humanism in terms of love, friendship, sacrifice, and loyalty.

## **II. The Androgynous Representation in the Novel**

The Androgyne is defined as a person who combines the fundamental characteristics of the two sexes who can be both woman and man or genderless or bisexual. *The Left Hand of Darkness* will be analyzed according to the combination of the two previously mentioned

theories of Bulter and Bem. Based on Bem's theory, the novel will be discussed through its three main lenses of androcentrism, gender polarization, and biological essentialism. It will be helpful to examine how the main characters are perceived. In addition to Bem's enculturated lens theory, Bulter's performativity theory of gender will highlight how the characters are portrayed in the novel and whether their gender is performed based on Butler's theory examples. The main focus of these two theories is how gender is performed and represented, how the novel tackles the inequality of gender and how the lenses of Bem are used to discuss gender.

In this regard, Bem's enculturated lens theory can be seen in the Terra Genly Ai since he is an outsider who looks to the Gethenians from the perspective of a completely different culture. As Bem's lens of androcentrism argues that males are superior and powerful whereas females are weak and inferior which can be seen in Genly Ai's view that is adapted from his own culture and society. This social binary does not provide individuals with the chance to see the other differences between human beings beyond gender, as a result Genly could not accept the sexual nature of Gethenians and he was not able to communicate with them. Genly considers the Gethenians as deviants because his own definition of gender does not match with their nature and this was clear when he narrates: "a man wants his virility regarded, a woman wants her femininity appreciated, however indirect and subtle the indications of regard and appreciation. On Winter they will not exist. One is respected and judged only as a human being. It is an appalling experience" (Le Guin 49). Even though Genly Ai passed two years on the planet of Gethen he confessed that he could neither grasp nor see the real nature of the Gethenians as he stated that: "Though I had been nearly two years on Winter I was still far from being able to see the people of the planet through their own eyes I tried to, but my efforts took the form of self-consciously seeing a Gethenian first as a man, then as a woman ..." (Le Guin 10). Another problem that faces Genly to understand the Gethenians that he

could not consider them as equal as him because he could not identify their gender (Annas 151 as qtd. in Kesteren 17). In return the Gethenians see Genly as a deviant in which they labeled him as “pervert” (Le Guin 21) from their society’s norm in which he later realizes through the story that he was alienated because of his protection to his male sexuality.

Following the next lens of the theory, that is the lens of gender polarization which does not exist on Gethen because of the lack of gender. Bem’s lens of sexual polarization acts in two ways: first, it explains that “mutually exclusive scripts for being male and female” (Bem 81 as qtd. in Kesteren 17). As a result, this does not apply to Gethen, because there are no exceptions for men and women, and because there is no gender duality. The only time a Gethenian can show signs of a certain physical sex is during Kemmer and pregnancy in which a Gethenian who is pregnant with a baby at that time can be defined as a female until the baby is born, this is what Genly Ai discovers over time:

If the individual was in the female role and was impregnated, hormonal activity of course continues, and for the 8.4-month gestation period and the 6- to 8-month lactation period this individual remains female. The male sexual organs remain retracted (as they are in somer), the breasts enlarge somewhat, and the pelvic girdle widens. With the cessation of lactation, the female reenters somer and becomes once more a perfect androgyne. (Le Guin 48)

Therefore, a Gethenian can only be gendered during Kemmer and pregnancy, but these Kemmer eras have no impact on Gethenian's political and social climate: “The society of Gethen, in its daily functioning and in its continuity, is without sex” (Le Guin 49). Another aspect emphasized by Genly Ai is his understanding that he cannot treat the Gethenians as bisexual because it forces them to possess male or female roles: “while adopting towards him a corresponding role dependent on your expectations of the patterned or possible interactions

between persons of the same or the opposite sex” (Le Guin 49). Second, sexual polarization explains that “any person or behaviour that deviates from these scripts as problematic” (Bem 81 as qtd. in Kesteren 18) in this regard, Genly Ai’s inability to use non-gender pronouns such as "they" and "them" can indeed be regarded as an error in the gender language of Terran. The absence of gender means that Gethen has no gender behavior, because there is no script that Gethenian people must complete according to their gender, this does not mean that there are no behavioral conducts at all. However, the land in Karhide is changing, and this is how the people communicate in which shifgethor was used to force the Gethenians to respect others. Although this can be regarded as a behavioral act, it does not correspond to any concept of gender, so it cannot be compared with Bem's second concept of gender polarization.

However, there are times when Genly Ai argues that they have various masculine characteristics. For example, when Genly Ai has his first meeting with King Agraven, his attitude towards Genly Ai can be seen as hostile and dismissive as he disapproves Genly Ai's proposal to join the Ekumen in which these features can be observed as masculine. Genly Ai, however, perceives Argaven as feminine: “Argaven was less kingly, less manly, than he looked at a distance among his courtiers. His voice was thin, and he held his fierce lunatic head at an angle of bizarre arrogance” (Le Guin 19). This quote is a clear example of how Genly Ai tries to associate gender-based traits with androgynous individuals even if the Gethenian politics is perceived as masculine, in the end it does not matter. The masculine and feminine features in Gethen simply do not exist, so there is no need to change the gender as it has no meaning, hence the attempt to apply a gender theory to an androgynous civilization is useless.

Biological essentialism is another concept that is difficult to define in the Gethenian society, mainly because this lens attempts to rationalize and legitimize the first two through describing them as natural and inevitable products of the innate biological differences

between the sexes. Men and women are physically different in which each gender has certain characteristics: males are active and females are passive. But this cannot be defined in this way by the Gethenians, as Genly Ai said: “They do not see one another as men or women” (Le Guin 49), which means that they are not distinguished by physical sex. However, it can be said that Gethenians’ judgement is based on his masculinity. According to Bem, social biologists refer to men as promiscuity; it may also be the Gethenian people's view of the human race, because they are not hermaphrodite like them. This means that the Gethenians apply biological essentialism, but it does not apply to them at all because it is not necessary. There are no gender-based biological differences between them in which they all have the same sommer and kemmer cycle, and they did not see the importance of gender during the kemmer period. Genly Ai also discovered this: “I suspect that the distinction between a maternal and a paternal instinct is scarcely worth making; the paternal instinct, the wish to protect, to further, is not a sex-linked characteristic” (Le Guin 51). In the study of internalized lenses, Bem proposed the idea of eliminating androcentrism and biological essentialism. For this concept, this means that the world is no longer visible from male experience; males and females are different on a biological level. Le Guin tried to eliminate all these lenses in *The Left Hand of Darkness* as she argued in her essay “is gender necessary” (1976): “I eliminated gender, to find out what was left. Whatever was left would be, presumably, simply human” (6) through this idea of eliminating gender, Le Guin created a world without sexual norms, gender domination and gender inequality, all what remains is political, ecological and cultural issues that are no longer affected by sexual discourse. Le Guin's concept of non-gendered society originated from the idea of alienation (172). In a gender-oriented society, marginalized groups always strive to be different in which Le Guin argues as follows:

Instead of a search for balance and integration, there is a struggle for dominance.

Divisions are insisted upon, interdependence is denied. The dualism of value that

destroys us, the dualism of superior/inferior, ruler/ruled, owner/owned, user/used, might give way to what seems to me, from here, a much healthier, sounder, more promising modality of integration and integrity. (172)

Even if gender is not Gethenian's dominant factor, political power still causes a kind of division, which is only related to your social status, not because of gender differences. Le Guin showed in her novel *The Left Hand of Darkness* that when sexism is abandoned and an equal society is established, the world will become a better place. Bem's enculturated lens theory clearly shows that the views of Genly Ai to Gethen and its residents are strongly influenced by androcentrism and gender polarization lenses. Gethen is a kind of cultural shock for the protagonist. Because of his foreign perspective, he cannot deal with the difference between his own ideas and the operation of the Gethen's Agency. In certain behaviors, he gradually realized that it was invalid, which eventually led Genly Ai to believe that his dualistic view was not applicable to the Gethenians, which made him adopt a more open attitude. In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Le Guin deals with the idea of a society which has no gender and how useful a society without sexual preconception would be.

Judith Butler's performativity theory of gender is another important idea that is manifested in *The Left Hand of Darkness* which considers gender as not a component, but as it is derived from human behavior and specified by extrinsic factors. In Gethen, physical gender differences are actually performed because they are the result of repeated heterosexual behavior. The fact that Gethenians' sexual characteristics need to be recreated for each cycle, assume that the dual categories of men and women do not matter. Despite the fact that sexual characteristics of Gethenians are not static, and people cannot decide their own gender, which shows that gender is obligatory. A Gethenian can become a woman in one cycle and a man in the next one. In *Bodies That Matter*, Judith Butler wrote that gender is constructed through a series of "compulsory performances" (Butler 238 as qtd. in La pointe). For Gethenians, sexual



roles are not perpetual, but spontaneous, and therefore mandatory, the sexuality of Gethenians separates the concept of gender and sex and creates its own boundaries, despite the social definition of gender; certain sexual activities are still prohibited. Paradoxically, this novel eliminates the duality of gender by saying that Gethenian's fluidity reinforces the view that biological gender confirms the gender difference between men and women on other planets, since gender characteristics of Gethenians are inherent for four-fifths of a month, the concept of gender has not been developed in the Gethenian society. With the course of the story, an anonymous visitor from another planet pointed out that in Gethen: "there is no division of humanity into strong and weak halves, protective/protected, dominant/submissive, owner/chattel, active/passive" (Le Guin 49). However, by referring to these binary, she emphasizes their relevance in a society where everyone is a permanent male or female. In this regard, the explorer informs future visitors that the Gethenians may confuse them with their inability to define gender: "A man wants his virility regarded, a woman wants her femininity appreciated [ . . . ] On Winter they will not exist. One is respected and judged only as a human being which is an appalling experience" (Le Guin 49). By juxtaposing "masculinity" and "femininity", the narrator assumes that these characteristics are opposed and they are part of each person's identity. On the contrary, Butler writes that gender is produced by social norms, and each person "never quite inhabits the ideals s/he is compelled to approximate" (Butler 231 as qtd. in La pointe). Butler does not believe that gender is a component of a person's personality, but it is a role that can never be performed completely.

Nearly the end of the novel, Ai's repression of Estraven's death illustrates Butler's idea that heterosexuals should reject homosexuality, Estraven's death can be explained as suicide, which is forbidden on Gethen. Ai hugged Estraven before he died, although the guards tried to stop him:

They shot to kill him. He was dying when I got to him, sprawled and twisted away from his skis that stuck up out of the snow, his chest half shot away. I took his head in my arms and spoke to him, but he never answered me; only in a way he answered my love for him, crying out through the silent wreck and tumult of his mind as consciousness lapsed, in the unspoken tongue, once, clearly, "Areck!" Then no more. I held him, crouching there in the snow, while he died. They let me do that. (Le Guin 138)

After Estraven's death, Ai tried to tell him that he loved him, but found that he couldn't do it. By saying "They let me do that" Ai pointed out that the guards did not allow him to sorrow. In parallel, Butler wrote in her work *Bodies That Matter* "Insofar as grief remains unspeakable, the rage over the loss can redouble by virtue of remaining unavowed" (Butler 236 as qtd. in La pointe) in which she emphasized that heterosexual authorities also deprived homosexuals of the right to cry publicly because they did not recognize the legality of homosexual relationships. The guards' prevention Ai to grief is not because of his sexual orientation, but because Estraven is considered a traitor. The above passage shows that the authorities deny that people's pain is to suppress forbidden relationships; this also shows that Ai suppressed his love for Estraven because his feelings were not heterosexually strict.

Le Guin's greatness as an American postmodern science fiction writer was highly clear in her novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*; since she balanced between the use of two different concepts, Humanism and Androgyny and portrayed them in one character the Gethenian Estraven. This Human like-character portrays different humanistic aspects through the course of the whole novel in which he manifested through his relationship with the Terran Genly Ai. Moreover, Le Guin applied two main theories that are Bem's Enculturated lens theory and Butler's Performativity theory. Bem's theory was portrayed in Genly Ai only through applying the first lens Androcentrism. Ai judges Gethenians as inferior based on his own culture even though, they have no fixed gender. So, the other two lenses cannot be applied

since the Gethenian society lacks gender distinctions. Le Guin also applied Butler's theory that is based on the human behavior and performance. Even though, the Gethenians have no static gender in which, they can develop both male and female aspects interchangeably during their Kemmer cycles. These behaviors did not dominate their life and did not influence their gender nature during some.

## Conclusion

The American postmodern science fiction has changed human's life. It is considered as a complex genre due to authors' skepticism about the influence of technology over human life in which they had a strong fear of the future. All these complexities were the result of their experience of war and world destruction. This context is full of works that deal with modern issues in the world in general and literature in specific. One of these main issues is the question of humanity among all these technological developments in which writers tried to see the world and humanity from a different perspective. Hence, strong fears of losing the human essence while focusing on technology and science fiction that may abolish further vision of the world by next generations. Postmodernist authors perceive the world as a link between what can be as a science fiction and what is considered as features of humanism.

This dissertation examines the characteristics of Postmodern Science Fiction works. It links between the use of imagination and technology to highlight the humanistic concepts in a postmodern science fictional literary context. It also discusses the Androgynous nature of the characters as a technological creation with preserving the existence of Human essence. This study emphasizes the results that postmodernists face with a society that does not care about the human value. The famous science fiction American writer Ursula K. Le Guin aims to comment on the postmodern truth according to her own experience in life and her perception of the world. In which, she offers a completely modern view about sex through her novel, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, to discover what would be left when sex does not exist in a world inhabited by both humans and human-like creatures.

In the novel, *The Left Hand of Darkness* Le Guin portrays a new form of postmodern science fictional characteristics to create her own version of writings. She displays postmodernism in her masterpiece in both its form and content using a fragmented narrative

technique. The events of the story are narrated by two different points of view which are the two protagonists with the contribution of different planet's myths, religious stories, investigators reports and even technological chapters which tell about the creation of a new planet. Moreover, le Guin created a new race without gender distinctions to see how a world will be without the existence of gender and to show whether Humanism is built on gender. Furthermore, she used her imagination to create new technological and fictional setting, characters, planets and different innovations to shed light that technology is no more a threat to the existence of the human value.

Despite the novel is a fictional imaginative work, the existence of Human essence was obvious in Le Guin's created characters ,mainly, in the relationship of the two main characters Genly Ai and Estraven. These two characters established a strong bond despite all the difficulties they faced in terms of the distinct sexual nature between the two of them. In this regard, technology was no more used as an obstacle but as a bridge to facilitate communication between the human and the human-like characters that resulted in their mutual understanding. Le Guin in *The Left Hand of Darkness* balanced between the existence of Human characteristics and the technological development that was used for the benefit of her characters. So, she showed that Humanism cannot be detached from Science Fiction and technology.

## Works Cited

### I. Primary Sources

Le Guin, Ursula k. *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Ace Books A Division of Charter Communications Inc, 1969.

### II. Secondary Sources

Aldiss, Brian Wilson. *Billion Year Spree*. New York Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1973.

Annas, Pamela J. "New Worlds, New Words: Androgyny in Feminist Science Fiction."

*Www.depauw.edu*, [www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/15/annas15art.htm](http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/15/annas15art.htm). Accessed 22 Apr. 2021.

Attebery, Brian. "The Magazine Era: 1926–1960." *The Cambridge Companion to Science*

*Fiction*. Eds. Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Bem, Sandra Lipsitz. *The Lenses of Gender: Transforming the Debate on Sexual Inequality*.

Yale University Press, 1993. *JSTOR*.

Bertens, Hans. *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History*, 2005.

Brann, Eva T. H. "What Is Postmodernism?" *Review of the Harvard Philosophy*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1992, pp. 4–7, 10.5840/harvardreview1992211. Accessed 22 Nov. 2019.

Brantlinger, Patrick. "The Gothic Origins of Science Fiction." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1980, p. 30, 10.2307/1345322.

Broderick, Damien. "New Wave and Backwash: 1960–1980." *The Cambridge Companion to*

*Science Fiction*. Eds. Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn. Cambridge

University Press, 2003.

Brooks, Christopher. "4.1: Humanism." *Humanities LibreTexts*, 25 July 2019, [human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/History/World\\_History/Book%3A\\_Western\\_Civilization\\_-\\_A\\_Concise\\_History\\_II\\_\(Brooks\)/04%3A\\_The\\_Renaissance\\_-\\_Art\\_and\\_Learning/4.01%3A\\_Humanism](https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/History/World_History/Book%3A_Western_Civilization_-_A_Concise_History_II_(Brooks)/04%3A_The_Renaissance_-_Art_and_Learning/4.01%3A_Humanism). Accessed May 2021.

Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal*, vol. 40, no. 4, 1988, pp. 519–531. *JSTOR*.

---. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. 1993.

Cherry, Kendra. "Overview of Humanistic Psychology." *Verywell Mind*, Verywellmind, 21 July 2020, [www.verywellmind.com/what-is-humanistic-psychology-2795242](https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-humanistic-psychology-2795242). Accessed May 2021.

Copson, Andrew, and A C Grayling, eds. *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Humanism*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2015.

D'Amassa, Don. *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction: The Essential Guide to the Lives and Works of Science Fiction Writers*. Facts On Life, Inc., 2005.

Gomel, Elana. *Postmodern Science Fiction and Temporal Imagination*. 2016.

Harris, Cole, and David Harvey. "The Condition of Postmodernity." *Economic Geography*, vol. 67, no. 2, Apr. 1991, p. 154, 10.2307/143544.

Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Cambridge, Wiley-Blackwell, 1989.

- Herman, William E., and Bryan K. Herman. "Humanistic Themes in Science Fiction: An Interview with David A. Kyle." *The Humanistic Psychologist*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2006, pp. 263–280.
- Higgins, David. "New Wave Science Fiction." *A Virtual Introduction to Science Fiction*. Ed. Lars Schmeink. Web. 28 Mar. 2019.
- Hull, Keith N. "What Is Human? Ursula Le Guin and Science Fiction's Great Theme." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 32, no. 1, 1986, pp. 65–74, 10.1353/mfs.0.1118. Accessed 19 Oct. 2020.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, 2010.
- Huyssen, Andreas. "Mapping the Postmodern." *New German Critique*, no. 33, 1984, p. 5, 10.2307/488352.
- Istvan Csicsery-Ronay. *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*. Wesleyan Univ. Press, 2011.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Archaeologies of the Future: A Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. 2005.
- Jose, Jim. "Reflections on the Politics of Le Guin's Narrative Shifts (Réflexions Concernant La Politique Des Variations Narratives de Le Leguin)." *Science Fiction Studies*, Jul., 1991, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Jul., 1991), Pp. 180-197, SF-TH Inc, [www.jstor.org/stable/4240058](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4240058).
- landon, Brooks. *The Gernsback Years: Science Fiction and the Pulps in the 1920s and 1930s*. 2019.



Lapointe, Grace. "Light Is the Left Hand of Darkness: Deconstructing Gender Binarisms."

*Medium*, 24 Jan. 2018, gracelapoint. .medium.com/light-is-the-left-hand-of-darkness-Deconstructing-gender-binarisms-787809af471d. Accessed 19 June 2021.

Le Guin, Ursula k. "Is Gender Necessary?" *Aurora Beyond Equality*. Eds. McIntyre, Vonda N. and Janice Anderson. Fawcett Gold Medal, May 1976.

---. *Planet of Exile*. Ace Science Fiction Books, 1983.

---. *The Dispossessed*. Gollancz, 2002.

---. *Rocannon's World*. The Library of America, 2017.

Le Guin, Ursula K., and Brian Attebery. *The Word for World Is Forest*. The Library of America, 2017.

Mambrol, Nasrullah. "Analysis of Ursula K. Le Guin's Novels." *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 2 Jan. 2019, literariness.org/2019/01/02/analysis-of-ursula-k-le-guins-novels/. Accessed June 2021.

Mann, George, ed. *Mammoth Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. Robinson, 2001.

Marchyn, Aleksei. "The Left Hand of Darkness Background | GradeSaver."

*Www.gradesaver.com*, www.gradesaver.com/the-left-hand-of-darkness. Accessed June 2021.

Of Samosata, Lucian. *True History*. Amazon, 22 Feb. 2013, www.amazon.fr/True-History-Lucian-Samosata/dp/1482589362.

Palm, Kevin. *Androgyny and the Uncanny in Ursula Le Guin's the Left Hand of Darkness and Ann Leckie's Ancillary Justice*. 2014.

Poe, Edgar Allan. *Eureka*. 1846.

Raban, Jonathan. *Soft City*. Fontana/Collins, 1974.

Roberts, Adam. *The History of Science Fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*. Vintage, 2018.

Stableford, M. Brian. *The Sociology of Science Fiction*. University: Department of Sociology, 1978.

Stableford, M. Brian. "Science Fiction before the Genre." *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. Eds. Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, Cambridge University Press, 2003

Scott, MS, Elizabeth. "What Is Optimism?" *Verywellmind*, 11 Oct. 2020, [www.verywellmind.com/the-benefits-of-optimism-3144811](http://www.verywellmind.com/the-benefits-of-optimism-3144811). Accessed May 2021.

Suvin, Darko. "On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre." *College English*, vol. 34, no. 3, Dec. 1972, p. 372, 10.2307/375141. Accessed 24 Feb. 2020.

"The Left Hand of Darkness | Encyclopedia.com." *Www.encyclopedia.com*, [www.encyclopedia.com/arts/educational-magazines/left-hand-darkness](http://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/educational-magazines/left-hand-darkness). Accessed June 2021.

Tihana, Bertek. *Beyond Gender? Imagining Utopia in Ursula K. Le Guin's the Left Hand of Darkness*. 2014.

Van Kesteren, Kristel. *Gender in Science-Fiction the Representation of Gender Roles and Gender Performativity in the Left Hand of Darkness and the Handmaid's Tale*. 15 Aug. 2017.

Verne, Jules. *Voyage Au Centre de La Terre*. Editions Héritage, 1977.

Victor Oluwatosin Ajayi. "Science and Humanism." *ResearchGate*, unknown, 14 Aug. 2018, [www.researchgate.net/publication/327020110\\_Science\\_and\\_Humanism](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/327020110_Science_and_Humanism). Accessed 7 May 2021.

Wells, Herbert George. *The War of the Worlds*. B. Tauchnitz, 1898.

---. *The Time Machine*. Longman, 1988.

Wolfe, Gary K. "Science Fiction and its Editors." *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. Eds. Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Wu, Di. *What Distinguishes Humans from Artificial Beings in Science Fiction World*. 2012, p. 27.

Yuen, Isaac. "The Left Hand of Darkness: Nature, Culture, and the Other." *Ekostories*, 26 Dec. 2013, [ekostories.com/2013/12/26/left-hand-darkness-other/](http://ekostories.com/2013/12/26/left-hand-darkness-other/). Accessed 19 June 2021.

Zhang, Na. "Light and Shadow—Postgender Intersubjectivity in the Left Hand of Darkness." *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, vol. 6, no. 4, 31 Mar. 2016, 10.17265/2159-5836/2016.04.007.

## Resumé

Ce travail examine l'humanisme dans la science-fiction dans l'une des œuvres les plus célèbres de l'écrivain américain Ursula K. Le Guin (1929-2018). Il étudie également les éléments principaux de la science-fiction postmoderne et explore les aspects de l'humanisme dans tel genre de fiction tant qu'une philosophie, une tendance culturelle et même une doctrine littéraire. L'œuvre étudiée dans cette recherche est le roman *La Main Gauche de La Nuit* (1969) (Traduit par Jean Bailhache) qui est une fiction qui affiche de nouvelles dimensions technologiques et humanistes. Par sa technique narrative fragmentée et la description des planètes extraterrestres, Ursula Le Guin oppose l'Humanité à la Technologie de pointe et interroge la survie finale de ses personnages. Cette thèse présente trois chapitres pour démontrer à quel point la science-fiction d'Ursula Le Guin soutient l'Essence Humaine et met en lumière les valeurs humaines par l'utilisation de la technologie. La méthode de recherche est donc éclectique qui utilise différentes théories, notamment la théorie psychologique, la théorie philosophique et la théorie littéraire.

**Les Mots Clés :** Humanisme, Postmodernisme, Science-Fiction, Androgynie, et Ursula Le Guin.

## ملخص

يدرس هذا العمل الإنسانية في الخيال العلمي في واحدة من أشهر أعمال الأمريكيين أورسولا لوجوين (1929-2018). كما يدرس العناصر الرئيسية للخيال العلمي لما بعد الحداثة ويستكشف عناصر الإنسانية في مثل هذه الاعمال الادبية، بصفتها فلسفة، تيار ثقافي اوحتى تيار أدبي. الرواية قيد دراسة في هذا البحث هي رواية اليد اليسرى للظلام (1969) وهي رواية تعرض أبعادًا تكنولوجية وإنسانية جديدة. من خلال أسلوبها الروائي المتقطع وعرضها للكواكب بعيدا عن الأرض، تضع أورسولا لوجوين الإنسانية في واجهة التكنولوجيا الحديثة كما تتساءل حول نجاة شخصياتها في النهاية. تعرض هذه الأطروحة ثلاثة فصول لتوضيح مدى دعم الخيال العلمي لأورسولا لوجوين الجوهر البشري وتسلط الضوء على القيم الإنسانية من خلال استخدام التكنولوجيا. لذلك فإن منهجية البحث هي منهجية انتقائية تعرض نظريات مختلفة بما في ذلك النظرية النفسية والنظرية الفلسفية والنظرية الأدبية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الإنسانية، ما بعد الحداثة، الخيال العلمي، أندروجيني، و أورسولا لوجوين.