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Book Response
LeGuin

Interdependence

The transport “Mindful” is the connection between Urras and Anurras. [LeGuin 16] This seems to suggest the balance between the ideologies is mindfulness. Without that mindfulness and connection between the two, it is not possible to think critically because there are invisible walls around one's thoughts [LeGuin 16] and one's role determines one's behaviour, the role plays the person. [LeGuin 38] Thinking critically requires encounters with others that are able to think independently, because each has the chance to see “relationships that the other could not even see.” [LeGuin 16]

Opposition

There are some hyphenated names that seem to juxtapose opposites that are interdependent. This is seen in “Truck-and-Driver” [LeGuin] and “Speaking-and-Listening” [LeGuin 28] where each part of the construction is a part of a whole, but each part is also an opposite. However, “Peace-and-Plenty” is the first of these hyphenations to appear in the book. It is explained later that this is a town, but the hyphenation is interesting. The construction of the others suggests that “peace” and “plenty” are interdependent opposites. Generally, the two would be seen as qualities of a utopia, but the “ambiguous utopia” in the subtitle points to something else. The planets themselves could be taken as being the same juxtaposition, one having peace and the other having plenty. The struggle of the main character Sherek, through the two episodic stories, is one of trying to reconcile these opposites.

In both episodic themes, one leading up to Sherek's departure from Anurras and the other beginning at his departure, are a journey from the unfamiliar through appreciation and to disillusionment. The question “Why haven't their proprietarian societies collapsed?” [LeGuin 43] can be asked reflexively about the anarchist societies. The conclusion that each has advantages

and disadvantages is taken a step further when the Terran ambassador points out that Sherek's hell is her paradise [LeGuin 347] make it clear that there can be no one truth to be had about the moral correctness of interdependent opposites.

Surface the system

This interdependence of opposites is a system. If there is a system, there's an inherent responsibility in knowledge of that system. [LeGuin 225] The position of individuality within a community is important to preserve initiative and creativity. The position of the community in relationship to the individuals is a duty and form of survival. There are bridges between these spaces. "Number" is a bridge between rational thought and perception, between psyche and mater. [LeGuin 279] There is an interdependence between community and individual, and the dominance of one over the other is an imbalance.

Works Cited

LeGuin, Ursula K. The Dispossessed.