
GANZ NOTES ON *THE FARTHEST SHORE* (1972)¹

BY URSULA K. LE GUIN

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QUOTES

Hebrews 5 – ⁸ Son though he was, ^{*} he learned obedience from what he suffered; ^f ⁹ and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ^g ¹⁰ declared by God high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. ^h ²

¹ *Wikipedia* – “*The Farthest Shore* is a fantasy novel by the American author Ursula K. Le Guin, first published by Atheneum in 1972. It is the third book in the series commonly called the Earthsea Cycle. As the next Earthsea novel, *Tehanu*, would not be released until 1990, *The Farthest Shore* is sometimes referred to as the final book in the so-called Earthsea trilogy, beginning with *A Wizard of Earthsea*. **The events of *The Farthest Shore* take place several decades after *The Tombs of Atuan* and continue the story of the wizard Ged.** *The Farthest Shore* won the 1973 National Book Award in category Children's Books.”

^{*} *Son though he was*: two different though not incompatible views of Jesus' sonship coexist in Hebrews, one associating it with his exaltation, the other with his preexistence. The former view is the older one (cf. Rom 1:4).

^f Rom 5:19; Phil 2:8.

^g 7:24–25, 28.

^h 6:20; Ps 110:4.

² [New American Bible](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Heb 5:8–10.

Theodore Roethke – “The Waking” (1953) – “I learn by going where I have to go.” (Ursula Le Guin writes: “It is a sentence that has meant a great deal to me.”)

The Waking

BY THEODORE ROETHKE

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.
I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.
I learn by going where I have to go.

We think by feeling. What is there to know?
I hear my being dance from ear to ear.
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Of those so close beside me, which are you?
God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly there,
And learn by going where I have to go.

Light takes the Tree; but who can tell us how?
The lowly worm climbs up a winding stair;
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Great Nature has another thing to do
To you and me; so take the lively air,
And, lovely, learn by going where to go.

This shaking keeps me steady. I should know.
What falls away is always. And is near.
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.
I learn by going where I have to go.

Theodore Roethke, "The Waking" from *Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke*. Copyright 1953 by Theodore Roethke. Used by permission of Doubleday, an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke* (Doubleday, 1961)

His eyes were still on Arren, and now the boy looked up. As he had made his act of submission he had forgotten himself, **and now he saw the Archmage: the greatest wizard of all Earthsea**, the man who had capped the Black Well of Fundaur and won the Ring of Erreth-Akbe from the Tombs of Atuan and built the deep-founded sea wall

of Nepp; the sailor who knew the seas from Astowell to Selidor; the only living Dragonlord. There he knelt beside a fountain, a short man and not young, a quiet-voiced man, with eyes as deep as evening. [Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

But now the depths of him were wakened, not by a game or dream, but by honor, danger, wisdom, by a scarred face and a quiet voice and a dark hand holding, careless of its power, the staff of yew that bore near the grip, in silver set in the black wood, the Lost Rune of the Kings. **So, the first step out of childhood is made all at once, without looking before or behind, without caution, and nothing held in reserve.** [Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

“I shall go back to Enlad when I can bring my father some clear word of **the nature of this evil and of its remedy.**” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

It is, of course, a good test for every reader of every kind of book. **An unliterary man may be defined as one who reads books once only.** There is hope for a man who has never read Malory or Boswell or *Tristram Shandy* or Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*: but what can you do with a man who says he ‘has read’ them, meaning he has read them once, and thinks that this settles the matter? [Lewis, C. S.. *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle location 438.]

There is a certain bleakness in finding hope where one expected certainty. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3) . Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 534.]

Being an irreligious puritan and a rational mystic, I think it’s irresponsible to let a belief think for you or a chemical dream for you. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 2815, from her “Afterward”.]

Ursula Le Guin, “Afterward” - “The idea of individual immortality, an endless ego-existence, is more dreadful to me than the idea of letting go the self in death to rejoin shared, eternal being. I see life as a shared gift, received from others and passed on to others, and living and dying as one process, in which lies both our suffering and our reward. *Without mortality to purchase it, how can we have the consciousness of eternity? I think the price is worth paying.*” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 2837.]

SCRIPTURE – LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 2

There is much in this text that reminds one of Ged. When we read “high priest” here, think “Archemage.”

Hebrews 2 –

¹⁰ For it was fitting that he, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the leader to their salvation perfect through suffering.^g ¹¹ He who consecrates and those who are being consecrated all have one origin. Therefore, he is not ashamed to call them “brothers,” ¹² saying:

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers,
in the midst of the assembly I will praise you”;^h

¹³ and again:

“I will put my trust in him”;

and again:

“Behold, I and the children God has given me.”ⁱ

¹⁴ Now since the children share in blood and flesh, he likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,^j ¹⁵ and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life. ¹⁶ Surely he did not help angels but rather the descendants of Abraham; ¹⁷ therefore, he had to become like his brothers in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people.^k ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested. ³

^g 12:2; Is 53:4 / Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6.

^h Ps 22:23.

ⁱ Is 8:17, 18.

^j Is 25:8; Hos 13:14; Jn 12:31; Rom 6:9; 1 Cor 15:54–55; 2 Tm 1:10; Rev 12:10.

^k 4:15; 5:1–3.

³ [New American Bible](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Heb 2:10–18.

WHAT IS THIS BOOK ABOUT? THE TITLE?

Recall that the name of this book derives from words in a prophecy about the return of a King to Earthsea (after 2,000 years without a King).

“The Master Chanter’s a Havnorian and interested in the matter, and he’s been dinning the words into us for three years now. Maharion said, He shall inherit my throne who has crossed the dark land living **and come to the far shores of the day.**” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 261.]

It is important to notice that the Master Chanter speaks of “the far shores”, while Le Guin speaks in the title of her novel of “the *farthest* shore.”

“That is why nothing else can resist us. **Only one thing in the world can resist an evil-hearted man. And that is another man.** In our shame is our glory. Only our spirit, which is capable of evil, is capable of overcoming it.” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 534.]

TRUST

TRUST [אֱמוּנָה ‘emon, בְּטָחַת batakh, כֶּסֶל kesel; πείθω peithō, πιστεύω pisteuō, πίστις pistis]. Trust is confidence or faith in God’s promises. The psalms frequently exhort the reader to trust the Lord (e.g., 4:5; 9:10; 25:2; 31:6; 37:3; 40:3–4; 52:8; 56:3–4; 62:8; 115:8–11; 119:42). Paul says that a person who has trust or faith (**pistis**) is justified before God (Rom 5:1). See FAITH, FAITHFULNESS; JUSTIFICATION, JUSTIFY.⁴

Thomas Aquinas and others emphasized the relation of trust to the virtue of hope. *Trust has within its certainty an element of the unknown; were that not the case, trust would be replaced by utter certainty.* Thus, hope is inextricably linked with trust. Aquinas deals with

⁴ Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, ed., “[Trust](#),” *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 681.

trust under the virtue of magnanimity (ST II–II, q. 129, a. 6), where he calls trust a “strengthened hope” (q. 129, a. 6, ad 3). **Trust is not itself a virtue but is a condition for the virtue of hope.** It is this line of thought that influenced subsequent *Catholic spiritual writers, who saw trust as providing the intentionality of hope that made possible growth in the life of God.*⁵

TRUST – Recall how essential a role the giving and receiving of trust was to both Ged and to Tenar in the tombs of Atuan; how trust was the one Power, an Old Power, that could defeat the combined, distilled force of all of the Nameless Ones and their malice. So, consider this third of the Earthsea novels as “about” **trust**:

He was worth all the love Arren had for him, and all the trust. **For the fact was that he trusted Arren. What Arren did was right.** [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

And this message I do not hear, Arren, for I will not hear it. I will not take the counsel of despair. I am deaf; I am blind. **You are my guide. You in your innocence and your courage, in your unwisdom and your loyalty, you are my guide—the child I send before me into the dark. It is your fear, your pain, I follow.** You have thought me harsh to you, Arren; you never knew how harsh. I use your love as a man burns a candle, burns it away, to light his steps. **And we must go on. We must go on. We must go all the way.** We must come to the place where the sea runs dry and joy runs out, the place to which your mortal terror draws you.” “Where is it, my lord?” “I do not know.” “I cannot lead you there. But I will come with you.” The mage’s gaze on him was somber, unfathomable. “But if I should fail again and betray you—” **“I will trust you, son of Morred.”** Then both were silent. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 1746.]

But also, Orm Embar gave his trust to Ged, and Ged to him.

Then the dragon spoke. Ged listened and turned to Arren. “Thus says the Lord of Selidor: ‘I have come back to my own land, nor will I leave it. **I will find the Unmaker and bring you to him, that together we may abolish him.**’ And have I not said that what a dragon hunts, he finds?” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 2295.]

MAGNANIMITY

ST *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas

⁵ Michael Downey, [The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality](#) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 982.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* at “**magnanimity**” – “[Primarily in the Aristotelian sense of *μεγαλοψυχία*, variously translated as ‘greatness of soul’, ‘proper pride’, etc.] Well-founded high regard for oneself manifesting as generosity of spirit and equanimity in the face of trouble, etc. Also: greatness of thought or purpose; grandeur or nobility of designs, ambition, or spirit. Now *rare*. The meaning was sometimes less precise in medieval ethics, as the notion of *μεγαλοψυχία* was modified in accordance with Christian ideals and blended with elements suggested by the etymology of the Latin word (*animus* being capable of the sense ‘**courage**’); **hence ‘magnanimity’ is often classed as a subdivision of ‘fortitude’** (so Aquinas, following Macrobius, *In Somn. Scip.* i. viii. §7).” And further: “Nobility or generosity of spirit; superiority to petty resentment or jealousy; **noble or generous disregard of insults or injuries**; an instance of any of these.”

FORTITUDE – St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Question 123, article 1:

Wherefore it belongs to human virtue to make man good, to make his work accord with reason. This happens in three ways: first, by rectifying reason itself, and this is done by the intellectual virtues; secondly, by establishing the rectitude of reason in human affairs, and this belongs to justice; **thirdly, by removing the obstacles to the establishment of this rectitude in human affairs.** Now the human will is hindered in two ways from following the rectitude of reason. First, through being drawn by some object of pleasure to something other than what the rectitude of reason requires; and this obstacle is removed by the virtue of temperance. Secondly, through the will being disinclined to follow that which is in accordance with reason, on account of some difficulty that presents itself. In order to remove this obstacle fortitude of the mind is requisite, whereby to resist the aforesaid difficulty even as a man, by fortitude of body, overcomes and removes bodily obstacles. **Hence it is evident that fortitude is a virtue, in so far as it conforms man to reason.**⁶

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Question 129, article 1:

I answer that, Magnanimity by its very name denotes ***stretching forth of the mind to great things***. Now virtue bears a relationship to two things, first to the matter about which it is the field of its activity, secondly to its proper act, which consists in the right use of such matter. **And since a virtuous habit is denominated chiefly from its act, a man is said to be magnanimous chiefly because he is minded to do some great act.**

Now an act may be called great in two ways: in one way proportionately, in another absolutely. An act may be called great proportionately, even if it consist in the use of

⁶ Thomas Aquinas, [Summa Theologica](#), trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, n.d.).

some small or ordinary thing, if, for instance, one make a very good use of it: **but an act is simply and absolutely great when it consists in the best use of the greatest thing.**⁷

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Question 129, article 2:

*“I answer that, According to the Philosopher (Phys. vii. 17, 18), virtue is a perfection, and by this we are to understand the perfection of a power, and that it regards the extreme limit of that power, as stated in de Caelo i. 116. Now the perfection of a power is not perceived in every operation of that power, but in such operations as are great or difficult: for every power, however imperfect, can extend to ordinary and trifling operations. Hence it is essential to a virtue to be about the difficult and the good, as stated in Ethic. ii. 3.”*⁸

THE “KAPPA ELEMENT”

Michael Ward – Lewis later rewrote “The Kappa Element in Romance” as the essay “On Stories.” In this essay he talks about one particular cryptic thing that he thought was more important than any other. **He calls it the “atmosphere” or general feel of a story.** [Ward, Michael. *The Narnia Code: C. S. Lewis and the Secret of the Seven Heavens*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle location 453.]

A good writer won’t just give you a rollicking plot and crank up the tension by any old means. **A good writer gives you the flavor or feel of a whole world.** [Ward, Michael. *The Narnia Code: C. S. Lewis and the Secret of the Seven Heavens*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle location 453.]

And the odd thing about the *atmosphere* of a good story is that, although you come to know it, you don’t notice it. It is effectively hidden from you because it’s everywhere you look. Here is yet another example of looking along the beam! [Ward, Michael. *The Narnia Code: C. S. Lewis and the Secret of the Seven Heavens*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle location 477.]

⁷ Thomas Aquinas, [Summa Theologica](#), trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, n.d.). “This complete edition of the work, published in five volumes, was translated into English by the Fathers of the Dominican Province and first appeared in 1911. A revised edition was published in London in 1920, and in America in 1947. The Christian Classics edition is a reproduction of the 1947 Benziger Brothers edition.”

⁸ Thomas Aquinas, [Summa Theologica](#), trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, n.d.).

‘On Stories’ was first published in *Essays Presented to Charles Williams* in 1947. It was originally read, in a slightly fuller form, to a Merton College undergraduate literary society on the 14th November 1940 as ‘**The Kappa Element in Romance**’. ‘**Kappa**’ is taken from κρυπτόν and means the ‘**hidden element**’. [Lewis, C. S.. *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle location 168.]

But the fact is that what is said to be the most ‘exciting’ novel in the world, *The Three Musketeers*, makes no appeal to me at all. **The total lack of atmosphere repels me**. There is no country in the book—save as a storehouse of inns and ambushes. There is no weather. When they cross to London there is no feeling that London differs from Paris. [Lewis, C. S.. *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle location 277.]

Good stories often introduce the marvellous or supernatural, and nothing about Story has been so often misunderstood as this. Thus, for example, Dr Johnson, if I remember rightly, thought that children liked stories of the marvellous because they were too ignorant to know that they were impossible. But children do not always like them, nor are those who like them always children; **and to enjoy reading about fairies—much more about giants and dragons—it is not necessary to believe in them. Belief is at best irrelevant; it may be a positive disadvantage**. Nor are the marvels in good Story ever mere arbitrary fictions stuck on to make the narrative more sensational. [Lewis, C. S.. *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle location 370.]

Another very large class of stories turns on fulfilled prophecies—the story of *Oedipus*, or *The Man Who Would Be King*, or *The Hobbit*. In most of them the very steps taken to prevent the fulfilment of the prophecy actually bring it about. [Lewis, C. S.. *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle location 415.]

But if I am right in thinking that there is another enjoyment in Story besides the excitement, then popular romance even on the lowest level becomes rather more important than we had supposed. When you see an immature or uneducated person devouring what seem to you merely sensational stories, can you be sure what kind of pleasure he is enjoying? It is, of course, no good asking him. If he were capable of analyzing his own experience as the question requires him to do, he would be neither uneducated nor immature. But because he is inarticulate we must not give judgement against him. He may be seeking only the recurring tension of imagined anxiety. But he may also, I believe, be receiving certain profound experiences which are, for him, not acceptable in any other form. [Lewis, C. S.. *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle location 415.]

If so, nothing can be more disastrous than the view that the cinema can and should replace popular written fiction. **The elements which it excludes are precisely those which give the untrained mind its only access to the imaginative world**. There is death in the camera. [Lewis, C. S.. *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle location 438.]

It is, of course, a good test for every reader of every kind of book. **An unliterary man may be defined as one who reads books once only.** There is hope for a man who has never read Malory or Boswell or *Tristram Shandy* or Shakespeare's *Sonnets*: but what can you do with a man who says he 'has read' them, meaning he has read them once, and thinks that this settles the matter? [Lewis, C. S.. *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle location 438.]

The way to test which books have a good flavor, Lewis says, is to ask which books you reread. Having read a book once, you know the *plot*, so you know what's going to happen. Then why bother to read it again? ***You bother to read it again if you enjoy the atmosphere. You like being part of that imagined world.*** You can't be surprised by the events of the story, but you can be enthralled by its taste. In that sense, the atmosphere is much more important than the plot. [Ward, Michael. *The Narnia Code: C. S. Lewis and the Secret of the Seven Heavens*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle location 453.]

The re-reader is looking not for actual surprises (which can come only once) but for a certain ***surprisingness***. The point has often been misunderstood. The man in Peacock thought that he had disposed of 'surprise' as an element in landscape gardening when he asked what happened if you walked through the garden for the second time. Wiseacre! **In the only sense that matters the surprise works as well the twentieth time as the first. It is the quality of *unexpectedness*, not the *fact* that delights us. It is even better the second time. Knowing that the 'surprise' is coming we can now fully relish the fact that this path through the shrubbery doesn't look as if it were suddenly going to bring us out on the edge of the cliff. So in literature. We do not enjoy a story fully at the first reading.** Not till the curiosity, the sheer narrative lust, has been given its sop and laid asleep, are we at leisure to savour the real beauties. **Till then, it is like wasting great wine on a ravenous natural thirst which merely wants cold wetness. The children understand this well when they ask for the same story over and over again, and in the same words.** They want to have again the 'surprise' of discovering that what seemed Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother is really the wolf. ***It is better when you know it is coming:*** free from the shock of actual surprise you can attend better to the intrinsic surprisingness of the *peripeteia*. [Lewis, C. S.. *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle location 461.]

To be stories at all they must be series of events: but it must be understood that this series—the *plot*, as we call it—is only really a net whereby to catch something else. The real theme may be, and perhaps usually is, something that has no sequence in it, something other than a process *and much more like a state or quality***. Giantship, otherness, the desolation of space, are examples that have crossed our path. [Lewis, C. S.. *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle location 461.]**

In life and art both, as it seems to me, we are always trying to catch in our net of successive moments something that is not successive. Whether in real life there is any doctor who can teach us how to do it, so that at last either the meshes will become fine enough to hold the bird, or we be so changed that we can throw our nets away and follow the bird to its own country, is not a question for this essay. But I think it is sometimes done—or very, very nearly done—in stories. I believe the effort to be well worth making. [Lewis, C. S.. *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle 485.]

THE ARCHMAGE

“It comes from the Grove—the Masters must be there. **They say it burnt so, with a light like moonlight, all night, when they met to choose the Archmage five years ago.** But why are they meeting now? Is it the news you brought?” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 280.]

His eyes were still on Arren, and now the boy looked up. As he had made his act of submission he had forgotten himself, **and now he saw the Archmage: the greatest wizard of all Earthsea**, the man who had capped the Black Well of Fundaur and won the Ring of Erreth-Akbe from the Tombs of Atuan and built the deep-founded sea wall of Nepp; the sailor who knew the seas from Astowell to Selidor; the only living Dragonlord. There he knelt beside a fountain, a short man and not young, a quiet-voiced man, with eyes as deep as evening. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

Sparrowhawk the Archmage sat at the head of the table and seemed to listen to what was said, and yet there was a silence about him, and no one spoke to him. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 326.]

There is a breach, Thorion, there is a break, a wound, and it is this I go to seek. If I am lost, then maybe you will find it. But wait. I bid you wait for me.” He was speaking now in the Old Speech, the language of the Making, in which all true spells are cast and on which all the great acts of magic depend; but very seldom is it spoken in conversation, except among the dragons. The Summoner made no further argument or protest but bowed his tall head quietly both to the Archmage and to Arren and departed. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 393.]

In Ursula K. Le Guin's translation of the *Tao Te Ching*, in Book I, Chapter 15, which she gives the title "People of Power" -

Once upon a time
people who knew the Way
were subtle, spiritual, mysterious, penetrating,
unfathomable.⁹

Since they're inexplicable¹⁰
I can only say what they seemed like:
Cautious, oh yes, as if wading through a winter river.
Alert, as if afraid of the neighbors.
Polite and quiet, like houseguests.
Elusive,¹¹ like melting ice.
Blank,¹² like uncut wood.
Empty, like valleys.
Mysterious, oh yes, they were like troubled water.¹³

Who can by stillness, little by little
make what is troubled grow clear?
Who can by movement, little by little
make what is still grow quick?

To follow the Way
is not to need fulfillment.
Unfulfilled,
one may live on needing no renewal.

⁹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* at "**unfathomable**" - "*figurative*. Of feelings, qualities, conditions, etc.: **Incapable of being fully ascertained, explored, exhausted**, etc."

¹⁰ The *Oxford English Dictionary* at "**inexplicable**" - "That cannot be 'unfolded' or expressed in words; inexpressible, **indescribable**. *Obsolete*." Another meaning is "unintelligible", but that carries the idea of something that doesn't make sense, that is possibly silly. I think Le Guin wants more the idea of *indescribable*.

¹¹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* at the verb "**to elude**" - "To slip away from, escape adroitly from (a person's grasp or pursuit, *literal* and *figurative*); to evade (curiosity, vigilance, etc.)."

¹² "**blank**" - I think that the idea here is a person of undefined potential to take on the patterning of the other - an active potency for form.

¹³ I am not sure that I understand the connection between "mysterious" and "like troubled water." But I think it means that a roiled surface of water can prevent us from seeing through the water to the bottom, and for the same reason it makes the surface unable to reflect back what is above it. In this sense, "mysterious" - it keeps hidden from our seeing.

[Guin, Ursula K. Le. *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching* (p. 19). Shambhala. Kindle Edition.]

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ARRENDEK, THE “LITTLE SWORD”

“These are the Masters of Roke, Arren,” said the Archmage, “seven of the nine. The Patterner will not leave his Grove, and the Namer is in his tower, thirty miles to the north. **All of them know your errand here. My lords, this is the son of Morred.**” No pride roused in Arren at that phrase, but only a kind of dread. He was proud of his lineage, but thought of himself only as an heir of princes, one of the House of Enlad. **Morred, from whom that house descended, had been dead two thousand years. His deeds were matter of legends, not of this present world. It was as if the Archmage had named him son of myth, inheritor of dreams.** [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 303.]

“When my father sent me here he said to me, ‘I fear a dark time is coming on the world, a time of danger. So, I send you rather than any other messenger, **for you can judge whether we should ask the help of the Isle of the Wise** in this matter, or offer the help of Enlad to them.’ **So, if I am needed, therefore I am here.**” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3) . Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 371.]

“My lord,” Arren said, and his voice was steady now, “**it is true I come of the lineage of Morred, if any tracing of lineage so old be true.** And if I can serve you I will account it the greatest chance and honor of my life, and there is nothing I would rather do. But I fear that you mistake me for something more than I am.” “Maybe,” said the Archmage. “I have no great gifts or skills. I can fence with the short sword and the noble sword. I can sail a boat. I know the court dances and the country dances. I can mend a quarrel between courtiers. I can wrestle. I am a poor archer, and I am skillful at the game of net-

ball. I can sing, and play the harp and lute. And that is all. There is no more. What use will I be to you? The Master Summoner is right—” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 414.]

THE SWORD

For it was the sword of Serriadh who was the son of Morred and Elfarran; there was none older in the world except the sword of Erreth-Akbe, which was set atop the Tower of the Kings in Havnor. The sword of Serriadh had never been laid away or hoarded up, but worn; yet was unworn by the centuries, unweakened, because it had been forged with a great power of enchantment. *Its history said that it never had been drawn, nor ever could be drawn, except in the service of life.* For no purpose of bloodlust or revenge or greed, in no war for gain, would it let itself be wielded. **From it, the great treasure of his family, Arren had received his use-name: Arrendek he had been called as a child, “the little sword.”** [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 461.]

“**As swords go, that one is wise,**” said his companion, his eyes alert on their passage through the crowded bay. “Is it not a sword reluctant to be used?” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 564.]

THE INVITATION BY THE LORD OF SHADOWS

Hare, the former mage, speaking here - **No death. No death—no! No sweaty bed and rotting coffin, no more, never.** The blood dries up like the dry river and it’s gone. **No fear. No death.** The names are gone and the words and the fear, gone. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 788.]

There, in the vast, dry darkness, there one stood beckoning. **Come, he said, the tall lord of shadows.** In his hand he held a tiny flame no larger than a pearl, **held it out to Arren, offering life.** Slowly Arren took one step toward him, following. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 812.]

The best way that I know how to understand this is by contrast. When we, in close relationships, are out of sorts with one or more of those closest to us, TIME seems to go on and on. We dread having *to spend Time* with such people. Sometimes a person trapped in a death-dealing relationship, not only feels trapped, not knowing how to get out of the trap, but he or she feels, and may say aloud to himself or herself, “Oh no! I am in this for the rest of my life?!” In such occasions, the experience of Time is that it is a terrible burden, a “life sentence.”

By contrast, when we dwell in harmony and grace with one or those who are close to us, the only intrusion our experience of Time makes on us is *that there is not enough of it!* Or, more profoundly, and what then becomes the closest analogue that I know to what “eternal life” is, in moments of concord and grace with a person we love, and who love us back, the experience of Time disappears completely. **All is present, alive, and still.** Clock-Time can pass and we do not even notice that it has. We dwell, in other words, in eternity – everything given inside a single increment of Time.

ABOUT DRAGONS

In these stories, Dragons are magnificent, terrifying, and pre-moral or beyond-moral in the sense that a galaxy or a black hole or a super-hot star are not moral – they do not *do*; they *are*.

“The dragons! The dragons are avaricious, insatiable, treacherous; without pity, without remorse. But are they evil? Who am I, to judge the acts of dragons? . . . They are wiser than men are. It is with them as with dreams, Arren. We men dream dreams, we work magic, we do good, we do evil. **The dragons do not dream. They are dreams. They do not work magic: it is their substance, their being. They do not do; they are.**”... “Their blood is cold and venomous. You must not look into their eyes. **They are older than mankind.** . . .” He was silent awhile and then went on, “And though I came to forget or regret all I have ever done, yet would I remember that once I saw the dragons aloft on the wind at sunset above the western isles; and I would be content.”
[Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 549.]

This is an important conversation for us Christians who imagine that God needs to be, must be, has to be *moral* in the way we are moral or not moral. No! God IS; God does not decide and act as we do, as, by analogy, a galaxy just IS.

In the “Afterword” to *The Farthest Shore* by Ursula K. Le Guin, she writes: “But, by going with Ged where he had to go, I still had much to learn about the dragons of Earthsea, their history, their kinship with human beings. In *The Farthest Shore*, I began to see them clearly, Ged told me what to see, when he said to Arren, ‘And though I came to forget or regret all I have ever done, yet I would remember that once I saw the dragons aloft on the wind at sunset above the western isles, and I would be content.’... **The dragon are, perhaps above all, beautiful.... The dragons are beautiful, and also mortal, as tigers are. Long-lived, but not indestructible. Terrible, but not monstrous. Fierce, fiery, careless of human life, sometimes careless of their own lives. Destructive when angry, very much to be feared, and untameably wild. Mysterious, as all great wild creatures are mysterious.... But not incomprehensible.**”

At the beginning of Chapter Ten, “The Dragon’s Run” – “As *Lookfar* approached the islands, Arren saw the dragons soaring and circling on the morning wind, **and his heart leapt up with them with a joy, a joy of fulfillment, that was like pain. All the glory of mortality was in that flight. Their beauty was made up of terrible strength, utter wildness, and the grace of reason. For these were thinking creatures, with speech and ancient wisdom: in the patterns of their flight there was a fierce, willed concord.**” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 2077.]

THE BINDING OF CHOICES MADE

He stopped and after a while went on, “Try to choose carefully, Arren, when the great choices must be made. When I was young, I had to choose between the life of being and the life of doing. And I leapt at the latter like a trout to a fly. **But each deed you do, each act, binds you to itself and to its consequences, and makes you act again and yet again.** Then very seldom do you come upon a space, a time like this, between act and act, when you may stop and simply be. Or wonder who, after all, you are.” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 517.]

We “make” ourselves through the decisions we make. Yet, we have the illusion that there exists a self that makes the decisions rather than that we know/become that self in deciding.

How could such a man, thought Arren, be in doubt as to who and what he was? He had believed such doubts were reserved for the young, who had not done anything yet. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 517.]

We are best analyzed by probability equations, if you will, because who we are is not a substance (Latin substantia) that decides, but who we are becomes when we decide.

POEM

Listeners at Last

Oh when, when, when will we ever have enough
of whining and defining? Haven't champions
in the weaving of words been here already?
Why keep on trying?

Are not people perpetually, over and over and over again,
assaulted by books as by buzzing alarms?
When, between two books, the quieting sky appears,
or merely a patch of earth at evening—
rejoice...

Louder than all the storms, louder than all the oceans,
people have been crying out:
What abundance of quietude
the Universe must yield, if we screaming humans
can hear the crickets, and if the stars
in the screamed-at ether
can appease our hearts!

Let the farthest, oldest, most ancient
ancestors speak to us!
And let us be listeners at last, humans
finally able to hear.

Uncollected Poems

RESOURCES

The National Book Foundation Awards – <https://www.nationalbook.org/people/ursula-k-le-guin/>.

The National Book Foundation – the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Literature - <https://www.nationalbook.org/programs/dcal/#tab-2>. “One of literature’s most prestigious honors, the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters recognizes individuals who have made an exceptional impact on this country’s literary heritage.” Ursula K. Le Guin is among this very select group of American authors.

THE PROPHECY

Another very large class of stories turns on fulfilled prophecies—the story of *Oedipus*, or *The Man Who Would Be King*, or *The Hobbit*. In most of them the very steps taken to prevent the fulfilment of the prophecy actually bring it about. [Lewis, C. S.. *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Kindle location 415.]

But there's been no king on the throne in Havnor since Maharion died: eight-hundred years ago. Would the lands indeed accept a king?" "If he came in peace and in strength; if Roke and Havnor recognized his claim." **"And there is a prophecy that must be fulfilled, isn't there?** Maharion said that the next king must be a mage." "The Master Chanter's a Havnorian and interested in the matter, and he's been dinning the words into us for three years now. Maharion said, *He shall inherit my throne who has crossed the dark land living and come to the far shores of the day.*" "Therefore a mage." "Yes, since only a wizard or mage can go among the dead in the dark land and return. Though they do not cross it. At least, they always speak of it as if it had only one boundary, and beyond that, no end. What are *the far shores of the day*, then? But so runs the prophecy of the Last King, and therefore someday one will be born to fulfill it. And Roke will recognize him, and the fleets and armies and nations will come together to him. **Then there will be majesty again in the center of the world, in the Tower of the Kings in Havnor. I would come to such a one; I would serve a true king with all my heart and all my art,**" said Gamble, and then laughed and shrugged, lest Arren think he spoke with overmuch emotion. But Arren looked at him with friendliness, thinking, He would feel toward the King as I do toward the Archmage. Aloud he said, "A king would need such men as you about him." [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

I'm along to guard, or whatever you need—it's you who'll lead us, who can get to wherever it is we must go, and put right what's gone wrong." "Is it?" said the mage. "I thought so myself, until last night. **I thought I had a follower, but I followed you, my lad.**" His voice was cool and perhaps a little ironic. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

THE MISSION

It would seem that the mission is to defeat the great evil unleashed on Earthsea, when the Mage Cob tore open a hole in the world through his refusal of death. And so we imagine Ged needs to

gather himself, all of his powers, to go face that before whom he must eventually stand. Yet, it turns out that the real mission was to be found by Arren, Prince of Enlad, and then to recognize him for who he was – the future King of Earthsea – and for Ged to give the boy his trust.

From Chapter Ten – “The Dragon’s Run” – “I have found none to follow in my way,” Ged the Archmage said aloud to the sleeping boy or to the empty wind. **“None but thee. And thou must go thy way, not mine. Yet will thy kingship be, in part, my own. For I knew thee first. I knew thee first! They will praise me more for that in after-days than for anything I did of magery. . . .** If there will be after-days. For first we two must stand upon the balance point, the very fulcrum of the world. And if I fall, you fall, and all the rest. . . . For a while, for a while. No darkness lasts forever. And even there, there are stars. . . . Oh, but I should like to see thee crowned in Havnor, and the sunlight shining on the Tower of the Sword and on the Ring we brought for thee from Atuan, from the dark tombs, Tenar and I, before ever thou wast born!” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 2210.]

It is one thing to find the greatness in another person, perhaps very special greatness rarely found in a person. It is quite another thing to know how to teach that person what that greatness means ... as well as the price it will exact.

The Archmage nodded once, sharply. “That is what I meant. To deny the past is to deny the future. **A man does not make his destiny: he accepts it or denies it.** If the rowan’s roots are shallow, it bears no crown.” At this Arren looked up startled, for his true name, *Lebannen*, meant the rowan tree. But the Archmage had not said his name. **“Your roots are deep,”** he went on. **“You have strength and you must have room, room to grow. Thus I offer you, instead of a safe trip home to Enlad, an unsafe voyage to an unknown end. You need not come. The choice is yours. But I offer you the choice. For I am tired of safe places, and roofs, and walls around me.”** He ended abruptly, looking about him with piercing, unseeing eyes. Arren saw the deep restlessness of the man, and it frightened him. Yet fear sharpens exhilaration, and it was with a leap of the heart that he answered, “My lord, I choose to go with you.” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 414.]

Later, after the Archmage has consulted in the Immanent Grove with the Masters of Roke, and after long thought, he arrives at a DIAGNOSIS of “what is wrong” with Earthsea:

“A pestilence is a motion of the great Balance, of the Equilibrium itself; this is different. **There is the stink of evil in it.** We may suffer for it when the balance of things rights itself, but we do not lose hope and forego art and forget the words of the Making. Nature is not unnatural. This is not a righting of the Balance, but an upsetting of it. There is only one creature who can do that.” “A man?” Arren said, tentative. **“We men.”**

“How?” **“By an unmeasured desire for life.”** “For life? But it isn’t wrong to want to live?” **“No. But when we crave power over life—endless wealth, unassailable safety, immortality—then desire becomes greed. And if knowledge allies itself to that greed, then comes evil. Then the balance of the world is swayed, and ruin weighs heavy in the scale.”** [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 534.]

The *Oxford English Dictionary* at **“diagnosis”** – *“Medicine. Determination of the nature of a diseased condition; identification of a disease by careful investigation of its symptoms and history; also, the opinion (formally stated) resulting from such investigation.”*

My dad once told me – he was a Physician – that the highest, greatest Art of a Physician is diagnosis – getting the correct diagnosis.

Luke Timothy Johnson (2012) - Philo expresses it forcefully: “Nothing is so calculated to enslave the mind as fearing death through a desire to live” (*Every Good Man Is Free* 22). **Among these moralists, fear leads to slavery because it leads people away from courage and boldness: their liberty is turned to craven cowardice because they seek to go on living.**¹⁴

Luke Timothy Johnson (2012) - In terms of existential psychology, Hebrews supports the thought that terror of nonbeing (mortality) itself supports and structures the patterns of compulsion that can be regarded as idolatry. *Human self-enslavement through compulsion is, in effect, a response to the awareness of mortality.* Whether we can actually attribute this insight to the author of Hebrews is not clear. But it is certain that Hebrews here adds “liberation” to his glossary of terms expressing the Son’s work for his fellow humans and “the gift of God” (2:9), a list that already includes “salvation,” “sanctification,” “bringing to glory,” and “the world to come.” It is also certain that Hebrews here touches on the theme that will be developed later: the process of human perfection involves a change in one’s moral consciousness and moral behavior.¹⁵

Notice how Hort Town, and its addiction to *hazia* is associated with a commitment in the one addicted to surrender all of his/her personal freedom/power for the sake of being shown the way to avoid death.

¹⁴ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*, ed. C. Clifton Black, M. Eugene Boring, and John T. Carroll, 1st ed., The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 100–101.

¹⁵ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*, ed. C. Clifton Black, M. Eugene Boring, and John T. Carroll, 1st ed., The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 101.

“But names don’t matter there—that’s the point, that’s the point! It isn’t what you do, what you know, that you need. **Spells are no good. You have to forget all that, to let it go. That’s where eating *hazia* helps; you forget the names, you let the forms of things go, you go straight to the reality.** I’m going to be going pretty soon now; if you want to find out where, you ought to do as I say. I say as he does. You must be a lord of men to be a lord of life. You have to find the secret. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 788.]

Ursula Le Guin, “Afterward” – “So the book’s dark themes of loss and betrayal took shape. So Ged and Arren had to come to Hort Town, and **drug addiction and slavery** are seen for the first time in the Archipelago. **Evil, in this book, has an immediate, ugly, human shape**, because I saw evil not as some horde of foreign demons with bad teeth and superweapons, *but as an insidious and ever-present enemy in my own daily life in my own country: the ruinous irresponsibility of greed.*” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 2815.]

Consider how clueless political structures are to get at EVIL, at the operation of the “Old Powers” – aka the Capital Sins – and to stop it. In “fallen” Politics, these pathologies are simply “the way things are”, and skill as a politician has to do with his or her ability to “succeed” with his or her political agenda.

GREED [בצבֿצֿבֿ batsa’; πλεονέκτης *pleonektēs*, πλεονεξία *pleonexia*]. The term *greed* occurs throughout the OT as **covetousness, avarice, or insatiable desire, typically regarding love of money. Selfish gain or longing to be rich conveys greed’s idolatrous essence.** Israel, and especially Levitical priests, was forbidden to covet or crave anything (Exod 20:17), including food (1 Sam 2:29). The psalmist warns that greed leads to apostasy (Ps 10:3). **The prophets repeatedly admonish Israel that greediness is a chief cause of her spiritual decline and impending judgment (Jer 8:10; 22:17).** Individually, **greed destroys one’s life (Prov 1:19).** Thus, the model prayer in Ps 119 petitions God’s deliverance from **pleonexia** (LXX, 118:36). Greed is classified as a heinous vice in both the OT and NT (Isa 57:17; Rom 1:29).

The antonym of generosity, greed figures prominently in the NT and always in association with material gain. **Apart from idol worship itself, the NT views idolatry as only one thing: greed (Col 3:5; Eph 5:3, 5).** The NT abounds in tragic examples of excessive desire: Ananias and Sapphira, Judas Iscariot, false leaders within Israel, and false teachers within the church (Acts 5:1–10; Matt 26:14–16; Mark 7:1–23; 2 Pet 2:14–

LXX Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament)

15; Jude 11, respectively). **Mark strikingly juxtaposes greed's destructive nature with related human vices: envy, coveting, deceit, and evil desire (7:22–23).**

Unsurprisingly, therefore, in Jesus' and Paul's teachings believers are warned to shun greed and to avoid those within their community who pursue insatiate desires, and thereby forfeit claim to the kingdom of God (Luke 12:15; Eph 5:3–5; 1 Cor 5:11; 6:10). *See COVET.*

CHRIS M. SMITH¹⁶

Those were men in whom great strength and knowledge served the will to evil and fed upon it. **Whether the wizardry that serves a better end may always prove the stronger, we do not know. We hope.**" [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 534.]

There was indeed something wrong about Hort Town, wrong in the very air, so that one might think seriously that it lay under a curse; **and yet this was not a presence of any quality, but rather an absence, a weakening of all qualities, like a sickness that soon infected the spirit of any visitor.** Even the warmth of the afternoon sun was sickly, too heavy a heat for March. The squares and streets bustled with activity and business, but there was neither order nor prosperity. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 741.]

CULTURAL DECLINE - EVIL

There exists a long literature about “decline” in cultures – those describing that of the Roman Empire is probably the most famous of that literature.

¹⁶ Chris M. Smith, “[Greed](#),” ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 673.

I recall the two forms represented, on the one hand, by George Orwell,¹⁷ *1984* (published 1949), and, on the other hand, by Aldous Huxley¹⁸, *Brave New World* (1932).

Notice how Le Guin takes pains to describe the “signs” of decline:

And the sea captain said again, ‘No, they seemed *uncaring*.’¹⁹ And indeed, he said, there was sickness among them, and their autumn harvest had been poor, and still they seemed careless. He said—I was there, when he spoke to the prince—he said, ‘**They were like sick men, like a man who has been told he must die within the year, and tells himself it is not true, and he will live forever. They go about, he said, without looking at the world.**’ When other traders returned, they repeated the tale that Narveduen had become a poor land and had lost the arts of wizardry. But all this was mere tales of the Reach, which are always strange, and only my father gave it much thought. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3) . Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

But Root came back to our hall distressed and laid his staff down and said, ‘My lord, I cannot say the spells.’ My father questioned him, **but he could say only, ‘I have forgotten the words and the patterning.’** So my father went to the marketplace and said the spells himself, and the festival was completed. **But I saw him come home to the palace that evening, and he looked grim and weary, and he said to me, ‘I said the words, but I do not know if they had meaning.’** And indeed there’s trouble among the flocks this spring, the ewes dying in birth, and many lambs born dead, and some are . . .

¹⁷ *Wikipedia* – “Eric Arthur Blair (25 June 1903 – 21 January 1950), known by his pen name **George Orwell**, was an English novelist, essayist, journalist and critic. His work is characterized by lucid prose, biting social criticism, opposition to totalitarianism, and outspoken support of democratic socialism. As a writer, Orwell produced literary criticism and poetry, fiction and polemical journalism; and is best known for the allegorical novella *Animal Farm* (1945) and the dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949).”

¹⁸ *Wikipedia* – “**Aldous Leonard Huxley (26 July, 1894 – 22 November, 1963)** was an English writer and philosopher. He wrote nearly fifty books - both novels and non-fiction works - as well as wide-ranging essays, narratives, and poems. Born into the prominent Huxley family, he graduated from Balliol College, Oxford with an undergraduate degree in English literature. Early in his career, he published short stories and poetry and edited the literary magazine *Oxford Poetry*, before going on to publish travel writing, satire, and screenplays. He spent the latter part of his life in the United States, living in Los Angeles from 1937 until his death. By the end of his life, Huxley was widely acknowledged as one of the foremost intellectuals of his time. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature seven times and was elected Companion of Literature by the Royal Society of Literature in 1962.”

¹⁹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* at the verb “**to care**” – “To sorrow or grieve. *Obsolete.*” This is the earliest, Old English, meaning. In the 13th century, it could mean: “to take thought for, provide for, look after, take care of.”

deformed.” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

“In the South Reach, first. Latterly even in the south of the Archipelago, in Wathort. There is no more magic done in Wathort, men say. It is hard to be sure. That land has long been rebellious and piratical, and to hear a Southern trader is to hear a liar, as they say. **Yet the story is always the same: the springs of wizardry have run dry.**” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

“I have no counsel.” The Patterner looked now at Ged, and his greenish eyes were cold. **“I am afraid,” he said. “There is fear. There is fear at the roots.” “Aye,” said Ged. “We must look to the deep springs, I think.** We have enjoyed the sunlight too long, basking in that peace which the healing of the Ring brought, accomplishing small things, fishing the shallows. **Tonight we must question the depths.**” And so he left the Patterner alone, gazing still at the spider in the sunny grass. [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

“You have a sense for the black things, Sparrowhawk,” said the Doorkeeper. “You ever did. Say what you think is wrong.” **“I do not know. There is a weakening of power. There is a want of resolution. There is a dimming of the sun.** I feel, my lords—I feel as if we who sit here talking were all wounded mortally, and while we talk and talk our blood runs softly from our veins. . . .” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 349.]

“I JUST DON’T CARE”

How does one come to say such a thing? What exactly is happening in a person who says this? The emotion deployed to frame the words is perhaps the most important point. I am thinking

here of the Capital Sin of sloth – its two forms: *acedia*²⁰ (to do with one’s relationship with God) and *tristitia*²¹ (melancholy; listlessness).

The *Oxford English Dictionary* at the phrase “**not to care**” – “*not to care* passes from the notion of ‘not to trouble oneself’, to those of ‘not to mind, not to regard or pay any deference or attention, to pay no respect, be indifferent’. Const. *for*, etc.”

POLITICS & WISDOM

Government and politics are able to address, if they are any good, the public activities and problem of people. But evil is something that has happened in the souls of people, and government and politics has no mastery dealing with that.

“You know, my lord, that the prince my father is a wizardly man, being of the lineage of Morred, and having spent a year here on Roke in his youth. **Some power he has and knowledge, though he seldom uses his arts, being concerned with the ruling and ordering of his realm, the governance of cities and matters of trade.** [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3) . Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

Arren’s father was still wise enough to recognize when the Masters of the Isle of Roke were needed, and so sent his son to them.

My father believes that this matter, and the tale of Narveduen, show some evil at work in our part of the world. **He desires the counsel of the Wise.** [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3) . Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

After describing to Lord Sparrowhawk, Archmage, the “signs” of decline, he says:

²⁰ Franco Montanari, ed. Madeleine Goh and Chad Schroeder, [*The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*](#) (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015) - ἀκηδία -ας, ἡ [ἀκηδής] **indifference, apathy, indolence** Hp. *Gland.* 12 Cic. *ad Att.* 12.45. *etc.*; ἐν ἀκηδία καὶ καμάρῳ in exhaustion and fatigue Luc. *Herm.* 77 | **heedlessness, with gen.** Aret. *C.A.* 1.1.28 | **anxiety, desperation** Cyr.¹ *Io.* 4.314A, *al. etc.* | **phys. weariness, torpor:** ὁ ἐκ τῆς ὁδοῦ κόπος ἐπιτείνων τὴν ἄ. since the toils of the journey increased the exhaustion Greg.¹ *epist.* 1.10 | **theol. mor. acedia, sloth** (*Lat.* *desidia*), *one of the 7 deadly sins* Cyr.¹ *Ps.* 90.6 *etc. frequently v.l. for ἀκήδεια (see)* | *Ion.* -ίη.²⁰

²¹ *Lewis and Short Dictionary of Latin* at “*tristitia*” – “sadness, mournfulness, sorrow, grief, melancholy, gloominess, dejection.”

“I shall go back to Enlad when I can bring my father **some clear word of the nature of this evil and of its remedy.**” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle Edition.]

Gamble speaking to Arren speaks to the “natural” Balance between the Governing function and the Wisdom function:

How long has it been, seventeen years or eighteen, since the Ring of the King’s Rune was returned to the Tower of the Kings in Havnor? Things were better for a while then, but now they’re worse than ever. **It’s time there was a king again on the throne of Earthsea, to wield the Sign of Peace.** People are tired of wars and raids and merchants who overprice and princes who overtax and all the confusion of unruly powers. **Roke guides, but it can’t rule. The Balance lies here, but the Power should lie in the King’s hands.**” ... Would the lands indeed accept a king?” “If he came in peace and in strength; **if Roke and Havnor recognized his claim.**” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 261.]

[The Master Chanter speaking] Eight hundred years has the heart of the world been empty! We have the crown, but no king to wear it. We have the Lost Rune, the King’s Rune, the Rune of Peace, restored to us, but have we peace? **Let there be a king upon the throne, and we will have peace, and even in the farthest Reaches the sorcerers will practice their arts with untroubled minds, and there will be order and a due season to all things.**” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 349.]

In a conversation in *Lookfar*, after the visit at Hort Town, with Sparrowhawk speaking to Arren

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“Never fear. It is much easier for men to act than to refrain from acting. We will continue to do good and to do evil. . . . **But if there were a king over us all again and he sought counsel of a mage, as in the days of old,** and I were that mage, I would say to him: My lord, do nothing because it is righteous or praiseworthy or noble to do so; do nothing because it seems good to do so; **do only that which you must do and which you cannot do in any other way.**” [Le Guin, Ursula K.. *The Farthest Shore* (The Earthsea Cycle Series Book 3). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Kindle location 976.]