



A Study of Ecological Ethics in Ursula Le Guin's *The Word for the World Is Forest*

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Abstract

Guin's (1972) *The Word for the World Is Forest* was written when the social awareness against all forms of dystopian values such as rational dualistic values, patriarchal hierarchy, anthropocentric instrumentality, and all forms of oppression and exploitation was promoted by modern ecological movements and the new wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. Guin's speculative novella challenges the above-mentioned dystopian values and suggests an ecological ethics which include principles such as respect, care, love, mutuality, friendship, interdependency, equality, freedom, solidarity, responsibility, and the interrelationship between man and nature; it recognizes the differences and diversity of all the living and nonliving members of nature. To reach these ethical principles human beings need undergo a fundamental change and transformation in their way of thinking and their belief system all in all, which will result in a healthy society and ecosystem and a better place for life for the members of nature. This paper is a study of such a strategy in Guin's (1972) *The Word for the World Is Forest* by benefiting from the theories set forth by ecofeminist philosophers Warren (2000), Plumwood (1993), and Merchant (1990) to show how the writer manifests the patterns of domination and oppression of nature and what kind of ecological ethics are emphasized in order to help man save life on Earth.

Keywords: deforestation, dualism, change, ecological ethics, patriarchy

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Introduction

Ecological ethics refers to the ethical principles and values that guide human interaction with the environment. It involves recognizing that the natural world has value and deserves to be protected and preserved for future generations. Ecological ethics acknowledges that humans are a part of nature and are dependent on the environment for their survival and wellbeing. Respect for the intrinsic value of nature, having responsibility to care for and loving nature, interconnectedness and interdependence, sustainability, recognition of the differences between humans and natural world, and acknowledgement of diversity are ethical principles that ecological ethics entails. Ecological ethics promotes the idea that humans must live in harmony with nature and respect the natural world in all of their actions and decisions.

As a speculative work, *The Word for the World Is Forest* is a powerful exploration of ecological ethics and how humans interact with the environment. Guin (1972) highlights the importance of ecological ethics and the dangers of exploiting the environment in her novel. She shows how treating the natural world as a resource to be exploited can have devastating consequences, not just for the environment but for humanity itself. One of Guin's goals, according to Carol P. Hovanec (1984), was to provide a hypothetical case study "of what can happen in the future if civilization continues to misuse the environment" (p. 84). So, it serves as a warning system for the future. Imagining future landscapes destroyed by human needs, it prompts consideration of how we should act today to prevent such probable scenarios. Guin presents a vision of what a future might look like if we do not change our current trends of life and do not go through changes in contemporary practice and thought (Payne, 2001). *The Word for the World Is Forest* is an attempt to focus on change in a human way of thinking and way of existence and to bridge human and nature. According to Olander and Greenberg (1979) in their book *Ursula Le Guin*, Guin starts with nature to reach man, unlike many science fiction writers who start with man to make him godlike. Her story is interlaced with themes of the fallibility of man and the need to deal with imperfect nature and the necessity of coping with the problems that the imperfect nature implies (Olander and Greenberg, 1979). She frequently presents the natural world as offering conditions that beings should accept while she continually portrays man as the one whose responsibility and accountability must be an essential component of nature. The emphasis on balance, equilibrium, and the interactions between man and nature in Guin's literature suggests an ethical theory. She held the view that while in his original state, man is generally good, but when this natural order is violated or abandoned, the situation might lead to chaos, injustice, and political unrest in the society. Guin provides us with a deep understanding of the place of man in nature, one that transcends everyday human norms, hypocrisies, and customs. According to Medicott (2022), Guin distributes power and destroys hierarchical systems, to encourage cooperation, negotiation, and connection between humans and the environment and to aid us in navigating a world beset by ecological catastrophes. Her work helps us learn to coexist in harmony and create a more peaceful future that is more equitable and environmentally sustainable and healthier for all.

The Word for the World Is Forest (1972), a utopian work focusing on environmental issues, redefines the interconnection between human beings and the natural world. It emphasizes the need for humans to recognize their interconnectedness with nature and to respect the natural world in all of their actions and decisions. Furthermore, Guin attempts to explain and demonstrate how man in a patriarchal, capitalist society seeks to dominate and exploit both nature and women, as well as where this oppression might lead the future of life on Earth. She then suggests how man and nature can work together to improve the earth by changing their perspectives and collaborating through partnership, unity, respect, care, and love as well as acknowledging diversity and the differences of "others" in order to help the continuity of life on the planet by destroying dualistic hierarchical structures. Guin stresses that to reach an interdependent collaborative life with nature and other marginalized groups, one should *resist* (my emphasis) the domination and exploitation agencies and go through a transformative change as a struggle for survival, as a necessity to follow a better life based on ecological ethics, and as an element to liberate the marginalized others. So, this paper will study how transformative change in humanity's way of thinking and lifestyle takes place to reach an ecological life based on care, love, respect and recognition of diversity and acknowledgement of differences in the light of the theories of ecofeminists including Plumwood (1993), Warren (2000), and Merchant (1990).

Discussion

Ecological Ethics and the Concept of Transformative Change and Liberation in *The Word for the World Is Forest*

Moylan et al. (2014) argues in *Demand the Impossible* that Guin created *The Word for World is Forest* "as an indirect critique of the genocide of the American Indian and the Vietnamese people by the US military-industrial complex and the struggle of those people against it" (p. 88). Guin describes how in Vietnam War the forests were defoliating and noncombatants of a different race were callously massacred in the name of peace and humanity. Apart from criticizing the US military invasion of Vietnam, the main theme that the story focuses on is the implications that deforestation might bring. It is obvious that woods play a crucial role in the climate and ecosystems of the planet. As forests store carbon dioxide and absorb oxygen, deforestation affects weather temperature patterns. Deforestation can lead to climate change, habitat damage, environmental degradation, and ultimately species extinction because there is a high species variety in forests. This might ultimately jeopardize life on Earth by destroying ecosystems. One of the main ideas behind *The Word for the World Is Forest* is to highlight the potential ecological effects of deforestation on life around the Globe. It shows a scenario in which, among other things, widespread deforestation, climate change, and biodiversity loss pose threats to the planet in which we live.

The story of *The Word for the World Is Forest* takes place on the planet Athshe, where humans, led by Davidson from Terran (Earth), have arrived to exploit the resources of the forest and enslave the native Athshean population. The Athsheans are living in peace and tranquility and have a deep interaction with the forest and

regard it as a source of wisdom. As Otto (2006) contends "The Athsheans depend on nature for their culture and survival" (p. 152). However, Selver, the main character, starts to realize that the humans' destruction of the forest ultimately leads to their own destruction as well. He begins to spread the word among his fellow Athsheans to reclaim their land and resist the humans. Selver's efforts ultimately lead to a rebellion against the humans and restoration of the forest.

As the story of the novel move on, Guin shows how in this dystopian future humans have significantly reduced the diversity of life on Earth and depleted many of its natural resources, particularly wood. The narrative depicts a "worn out world" (Guin, 1972, p. 12) that has virtually lost its biodiversity, been exhausted of its natural resources, and had contaminated its freshwater. In an effort to satisfy their own needs, mankind is currently stealing from other planets. First, they establish hierarchical notions of humanity wherein humans see themselves as the only rational beings above the Athsheans and their habitat, the forest, and contrast human/humanoid and human/nature dualism. Second, they resonate with dualistic logic wherein humans in Athshe perceive themselves as superior and separate from nature, which is assumed to be instrumental and devoid of intrinsic value. In this dualistic system, people view nature and its inhabitants as tools for achieving their goals. The idea that humans are superior beings produces a master/slave dichotomy in which the superior is seen as superior to both the forest and the native population and as such should profit from the inferior's labor.

There is no distinction between the forest and its creatures in Davidson's eyes. For him, they are all the same: unnecessary, irrational, inferior, and untamed things that need to be domesticated and harnessed. In order to meet the Earth's demand for wood, Davidson and his gang deforest Athshe and put its peaceful residents in danger. On the other hand, Davidson attempts to denigrate, oppress, and exploit the locals, women, and nature as a whole based on his patriarchal way of thinking. Davidson disregards the diversity, interdependence, autonomy, and intrinsic worth of both local peoples and nature, endangering both their very survival and biodiversity.

Davidson and his group's treatment of the forest and its natives manifests the anthropocentric capitalist man's self-interest and egoist way of thinking, which places man at the center of creation, accords nonhuman nature with no ethical significance, and understands nature using a framework based on human's value system. When a character, Kees, worries that Davidson's crew is not observing ecological principles by shooting deer on Athshe (Guin, 1972), Davidson makes an anthropocentric argument to support his act: "'it's the men that count. Not the creatures'" (Guin, 1972). Davidson continues his argument with Kees, who is concerned about the environment, by saying,

You worry about deer and trees and fibreweed, OK, that's your thing. But I prefer to view things in context by working my way down, and so far, humans are at the top of the list. Now that we're here, the world will turn out the way we want it to. (Guin, 1972)

The human-centeredness in Davidson is combined with an androcentric view that leads to hierarchical dualistic "top-down" relationships between humans and nature. This demonstrates how speciesism, misogyny, and the devastation of the forest

ecosystem are all consequences of the ideology of capitalism. Fear of the wilderness encourages its taming and commodification, while hierarchy among species allows the dominant species to act primarily in its own best interests. In other words, capitalism compels the commodification of knowledge about the issues it values most—wilderness, species, and women. According to Otto's (2006) assessment, "Davidson's knowledge of people and place is essentially commercial, fueled by a fetish nourished by the emptying of cultural and ecological meaning that allows the consumption of people and place, if not particularly for markets" (p. 154). Davidson's reflection on the goals of those who exploited Athshe serves as an example of this meaninglessness:

Men were here now to end the darkness, and turn the tree jumble into clean sawn planks, more desired on Earth than gold. Literally, since wood could only be obtained from trees and could not be obtained from seawater or the Antarctic ice. And on Earth, it was a luxury that was actually required. Hence, the foreign forests turned into wood. (Guin, 1972)

The way Davidson explains capitalism's aims in Athshe sums up how capitalism sees itself and the world. This supports a mythology in which production saves the day by clearing the forest and transforms it from a location of "primeval fog and barbarism and ignorance" to "a paradise, a real Eden". That is why terms like "darkness" and "tree-jumble" are imposed on the Athshean woods (Guin, 1972). In addition to providing wood, which is a necessity for human survival, Davidson views itself as noble in purging the forest and its inhabitants.

Davidson desires to clear the forest and transform it into goods useful to Terran like insatiable industrialists who treated the environment as a commodity, according to Hovanec (1984), who likens Davidson's mindset to the industrialist's outlook of late-19th-century America. As illustrated by Guin's novel, the basic premise for capitalism production and the subject of its discourse is the idea that the natural world is expendable. The belief that market interests take precedence over the natural environment is followed by the belief that everyone and every member of the environment, even humans, must serve the "progress" that capitalism poses. Davidson's action depicts capitalism's views of people who live in the areas it wants to market, just as it does for how capitalism feels about an expendable nature. The Athsheans are going to be rubbed out of their woods and culture sooner or later, and it might as well be sooner, Davidson says of the indigenous Athsheans. It's simply the way things turn out to be. Races that are more primitive must constantly make way for sophisticated ones or be absorbed. But a lot of green monkeys we can't digest, for sure (Guin, 1972). By demeaning the Athsheans and branding them as primitive and irrational, Davidson legitimizes the actions of capitalism that endangers not a native culture whose members are spiritually interconnected with the living forests and to one another, but a wretched group of "creechies" whose wild behavior confirms their inferiority. Davidson and his human gangs attempt to exterminate the indigenous Athsheans based on these presumptions. Nonetheless, they override their opposition even though it means losing their tranquil way of life.

The Word for the World Is Forest, thus, becomes a manifestation of what Warren (2000) calls the "logic of domination," which, in Warren's view, underlies all

forms of dominance and suppression, particularly those that affect marginalized groups, particularly women and nature. This logic also asserts that humans are morally superior to other beings and that this superiority justifies the subordination of those beings. According to Warren (2000), the patriarchal and hierarchical value systems of society and anthropocentrism are to blame for the dominance and exploitation of women as well as the environment. She contends that in order to have a healthy society, we must do away with patriarchal and hierarchical structures and open the door to an egalitarian, reciprocal interaction between humans and the nonhuman natural world. She is confident that this egalitarian relationship will lead to a recognition and appreciation for the similarities, distinctions, and uniqueness of both human and nonhuman nature (Warren, 2000).

Similar to this, Davidson holds a dualistic perspective of how humans and nature interact, with man at the top and women and nature at the bottom. They ignore the "Creechies" and the forest and reject their independence and view them as lacking rationality, which makes them inferior. For them, the forest and its inhabitants serve as a setting or tool to meet their requirements. They treat the local population and the lesser members of nature as one group that are inferior and can be governed and exploited. This is what Plumwood (1993), especially in reference to women and nature, refers to as "the logic of dualism" of self and other minor groups including women and nature. Moving beyond dualism, according to Plumwood (1993), necessitates a rearticulation and transformation of the hierarchical relationship between self and other through the establishment of some sort of interconnectedness and continuity while holding on to differences to create a communication space for moral concepts that were previously marginalized, such as respect, care, sympathy, gratitude, friendship, concern, compassion, and responsibility. According to Plumwood, establishing continuity and acknowledging the interdependence of humans and nature will lead to the flourishing of differences and a shift away from egoism and relationality. Unlike the Terrans, the Athsheans practice life in collaboration with the forest and believe they are part of the nature they are living in. The Athsheans hold fast to a non-dualistic worldview which is an endeavor to retain their interconnection with nature which is built on love, care, respect, and partnership with nature while understanding the differences and diversity. The Athsheans have a modest understanding of their position in relation to other people and in the larger ecosystem of nonhuman nature.

Furthermore, *The Word for the World Is Forest* explores the consequences of disregarding diversity and imposing one's cultural norms on others. The Athsheans have a deep connection to the environment and follow communal values that prioritize cooperation over competition. The novel suggests that acknowledging diversity is crucial to creating a harmonious and just society. By acknowledging the Athsheans' unique way of life and their connection to the environment, the humans can learn to live cooperatively with them rather than trying to dominate them. By respecting other cultures, beliefs, and ways of life, one can learn to coexist in harmony and create a more peaceful future.

As the novel shows the Athsheans, who have a deep and respectful relationship with their environment, exemplify partnership ethics. They understand the interconnectedness of all living beings and the importance of living in harmony

with the natural world. They operate through consensus and prioritize the wellbeing of their community over individualism. In contrast the humans see themselves as superior to the Athsheans and the natural world, and they exploit and destroy resources for their own benefit. But the Athsheans see their environment as partner rather than mere resources.

For Athsheans, as Merchant's (1990) partnership ethic theory states, humans are equal among themselves and equal with nonhuman nature regardless of their perceived status of their power. In Athshe, individuals, as partnership ethic says, are helpers, partners and colleagues and people and nature are equally vital to each other and there is a mutual living interdependence and mutual commitment. There is a conversation between the Athsheans and the forest. Hence the forest and the humans converse in a dynamically balanced and more nearly equal relationship with each other. In this ethical alliance, nature is an active collaborator with humankind (Merchant, 1990). Their society is a "polyphonic" one; every member of the community has its own voice; and as Merchant's (1990) partnership ethic says "both nature and humans will have voices and both voices will be heard" (p. 56).

The Athsheans recognize both continuities and distinctions between human and nonhuman nature and respect diversity. They acknowledge the connection and integration between human life and the natural world as well as the fact that humans are a part of and dependent on nature. Athsheans identify reality and their selves as the same as the forest; they view themselves as a part of the environment, the forest, they are living in: "Athshean man was branch and root" (Guin, 1972, p. 5). The forest is perceived as an organic extension for Athsheans. The term for the forest in Athshean is the same as the word for the world (Guin, 1972). Their world is the forest. Their minds function like the various parts of a tree, branch, root, vine, and river; their memories are the roots. They are the forest themselves, and when the forest is destroyed, they are also destroyed. The Athsheans see the forest as a reflection of their essential inner life, seeing each element of the forest as life rather than as an inanimate object. In other words, they internalize the scenery and use it as a mental metaphor. It is crucial to them that they recognize the intrinsic value of each forest component as being distinct, singular, and unique in its own right.

As there is no division between "the trees" and "the world", the Athsheans see in the felling of the trees the destruction of their world. When the Terrans cut trees, it is as though they severed the Athsheans bodies. For Athsheans, nature is not a phenomenon to be controlled, to be utilized as though it lacks life, but a living partner, and a source of biological and mental nutrition. Even the language describing their mental states is taken from that of trees. In such lines as "Tiny paths went under the branches, around the boles, over the roots; they did not travel straight, but surrendered to every obstacle, tortuous as nerves" (Guin, 1972, p. 2), the relationship between mind and forest is obvious. There are various references to roots: "He had feared that he was cut off from his roots," and "They have left their roots behind them, maybe, in this other forest from which they came, this forest with no trees" (Guin, 1972, p. 2). The atmosphere in the forest is similar to what the characters in *Forest* experienced:

The air was black and full of moisture, and you couldn't tell where to put your feet because it was all roots, bushes, and tangles. There were noises all

around, water dripping, rustling, tiny noises, little things sneaking around in the darkness. (Guin, 1972, p. 7)

The Ideas of Change and Liberty

The Word for the World Is Forest, according to Fancourt (2004) in *Altered States: Feminist Utopian Fiction*, "is examining the possibilities for change" (p. 165). The transformative change is important in addressing environmental destruction and social injustice. The transformative change can lead the man to liberty. The novel emphasizes individuals must be willing to challenge the status quo and fight for transformative change to achieve a free and more equitable and a healthier society. In addition, the novel highlights the need for institutional change in addressing ecological issues. Only by transforming the institutions that perpetuate environmental exploitation and social injustice, the novel suggests, can we hope to build a society is free and more equitable and environmentally sustainable. Thus, *The Word for the World Is Forest* emphasizes the need for continual change and transformation both within individuals and within society as a whole. By embracing change and working towards transformative solutions, we can create a more just and sustainable world for all.

For the Athsheans, change is a liberating force that will free them from Terrans' exploitation and oppression in order to take control of their future. They fight back against Terran oppression in order to maintain their freedom, even when doing so means giving up their nonviolent way of life and allowing their culture to change. As interwoven into the ecology of their planet, while displaced by the Terrans' invasion, the Athsheans abandon their pacifism and begin a furious endeavor to halt Terrans' exploitation and oppression writes King (1983). They suffer severe consequences as a result of their opposition to injustice and exploitation.

Although the Athsheans acknowledge the Terrans' differences and embrace them as one of themselves, the Terrans never accept them as members of their society. Instead, the Terrans introduce violence and cultural repercussions into the peaceful Athshean "civilization," which inadvertently erases the Athsheans as a result of the loss of one of their primary defining characteristics: pacifism and nonviolence. This results in a significant shift in their culture and worldview. "Perhaps after I pass away, people will be as they were before I was born and before you arrived, Selver laments to a Terran. Nevertheless, I don't believe they will" (Guin, 1972, p. 169). The Athsheans may be ecologically altered for all time as a result of their newfound knowledge of how to kill. As there is no distinct difference between one and the other or their surroundings, to murder another Athshean is to kill oneself.

However, they learn to kill in order to defend themselves and oppose the Terrans' dualistic values and their destructive policy. Killing here is a weapon of self-defense, a method of denial of a worldview, to reassert their radical dedication to all forms of life, to their world: to the forest. Killing arises as a refusal of a future that mimics the present world of Earth. The Athsheans do not accept that their planet is doomed to be ruined. They fight the Terrans to prevent it just in time. They refuse to acknowledge their own demise by rejecting human/nature dualism. The resistance and success comes via their unity.

Yet this resistance comes at a price for Athsheans. They are not the same people they were before. They lose their innocence and their ability to live a peaceful, nonviolent life. They contend that while nature will recover and the trees will grow back over time, the killing will go living in their minds. As Selver puts it “some time a god appears and brings a new means to do a thing, or a new thing to be done. A new type of song, or a new form of death” (Guin, 1972, p. 189). Selver, a symbol of change, realizes the necessity of killing humanity in order to save the forest. He embraces the attackers’ tactics and weapons and replaces their new ways with his old ways of peaceful life. As Olander and Greenberg (1979) write Selver becomes

a god of revolutionary transformation, just as he is a deity of death, he delivers something new—the killing of men—to the Athsheans. Selver considers killing not as an end but as a way of survival. He is the revolutionary Ore, the god of change, of energy, of freedom, who creates a new style of existence for the Athsheans. (p. 74)

He transforms from a passive victim to a leader of rebellion to resist humans’ domination. He represents a transformation in the larger society’s attitude towards the environment and social justice.

Thus, the story illustrates the notion of resistance which stems from a vision that enough harm has been brought upon their lives already and that if they allow oppression, exploitation and slavery to go on any further it would lead the planet Athshe and its people to a path of no return. So, *The Word for the World Is Forest* becomes a story of the rejection of oppression and exploitation, of refusing to go on a certain path in the awareness that it will be incompatible with life as Athsheans know and want it. The violence of the Athenians becomes an effort to achieve freedom. Guin (1979) in *The Language of the Night* states that, “the pursuit of art by the artist or the audience is the quest of liberty.” Most people go away from the road of pursuing liberty out of a desire for power in the sense of dominance over others. *The Word for the World Is Forest* started out as a purely idealistic search of freedom. The Athsheans oppose their Terran invaders, betraying their nonviolent ethic, but as Moylan et al. (2014) writes in *The Word for the World Is Forest* that “the resistance succeeds in persuading the League to withdraw its forces and keep Athshe off-limits for several generations” (p. 152).

The Athsheans presents a critical utopian viewpoint that envisions a society and an ecological that are fighting for survival in the face of impending extinction. Nevertheless, their culture is irreparably changed when Selver and his allies fight and slaughter the “yumens” in an effort to stop the destruction of their world. According to Coro Mena, everything will alter as a result of this act, which will transform “all men's dreams [...]” Even while Dr. Lyubov asserts that “they are a static, stable, uniform society,” Guin (1972, p. 33) writes that “they will never be the same again.” They are completely unprogressive, without a past, and perfectly merged. From an outsider's perspective, you could say that, like the forest they inhabit, they have reached a climax state (Guin, 1972). After the arrival of the Terrans, Lyubov gradually realizes that this perspective is completely incorrect. This is demonstrated by the Athsheans' willingness to change and advance their culture in response to threats to it.

Although they were living in harmony with their environment and acting as though they were a part of nature and experienced a peaceful life. The Athsheans enjoyed completeness of vision or state of being before Selver killed the humans, in which “the thing we had to do was the right thing to do; the road we had to take was the correct way and took us home” (Guin, 1972, p. 33). As a result, there was no distinction between what they did and what was morally correct. Yet as Coro Mena tells Selver, “[because] you've done what you had to do, and it was not right,” a fundamental rift in their civilization developed once killing humans became a part of their way of life (Guin, 1972). Although it would be too simple to claim that the Athsheans have transitioned from a simpler or more primitive existence to a more complex, advanced one, there is little doubt that they have undergone a change in their worldview and way of thinking. Every Athshean has been impacted by Selver's deeds; his dream's ramifications and realization reflect not only his own morality, but also that of his entire people and their culture. The rift within their culture indicates that the original wholeness is unsustainable; difference, diversity, and division are essential components of growth and advancement. In other words, utopian communities aren't always peaceful and without violence. It was occasionally necessary as a form of self-defense to defend your surroundings and yourself against exploitation and oppression.

Conclusion

As it was investigated, Guin shows how human anthropocentrism and capitalist consumerism along with “logic of domination” and “logic of Dualism” impose an ecological catastrophe and endanger the quiet, serene, and pacific life on the planet Earth in *The Word for the World Is Forest*. Man cannot be rationally distinct from other creatures and nature, nor can he be superior to them. Nonetheless, despite each of them maintaining their independence, autonomy, and agency, the lives of a man and the environment are intertwined and dependent on one another. Hence, resource depletion and biodiversity loss would lead to ecological crises including droughts, climate change, desertification, species extinction, and more, endangering both human life and nonhuman animal life. A Man should recognize that nature is not a source or a tool to meet his needs and serve him in order to achieve a healthy and balanced society. Nature, however, has its own inherent worth and autonomy. In order to create a reciprocal, equal relationship between people and the nonhuman natural environment, man must eliminate patriarchal, hierarchical social systems. The rejection of nature's dependence and autonomy could result from treating it as “other” because it is different. The man should be aware of the similarities, contrasts, and diversity between himself and nature, as well as the needs of nature. He needs to go past dualistic thinking. To create a space where ethical concepts like care, respect, sympathy, friendship, concern, and responsibility can be communicated, it is necessary to transform the relationship between oneself and others through the establishment of some sort of continuity while maintaining differences and diversity. Man and nature ought to converse and interact on equal terms. This would create the foundation for a polyphonic community where each individual has their unique voice. As it previously discussed, in accordance with Merchant's (1990) partnership ethic, we have responsibilities to one another as well as to nature.

In *The Word for the World Is Forest*, Guin paints a picture of what the world would look like in the future if people kept up their destructive practices that exploit and devastate the environment. Yet, she makes the case in this book that we should look into the possibility of altering our way of thinking and lifestyle in order to rescue the Earth's environment and the lives on it. She makes a point of saying that freedom from exploitation and tyranny comes from change. One must first fight against injustice in order to make room for change, even if doing so means giving up their peaceful and nonviolent way of life. The novel's protagonist Athsheans experiences a profound change in his worldview and way of thinking as a result of his resistance, which ultimately results in his liberation. The self-consciousness that results from this resistance. Le Gun highlights that violence and killing become a kind of a self-defense in the face of exploiters' repressive power by introducing them to Athshean culture. Killing becomes a means of survival for both man and the environment, and it represents a rejection of the dystopian future that man's handling of nature may bring about. And everything needs to change in order to save lives and protect freedom. Change is a shift in one's belief systems and way of thinking, altering the current situation and advancing a peaceful culture. To change is to give up dualism and hierarchy and embrace diversity and difference. Although the shift could disturb your tranquility, it is vital preserving both your existence and the life of the natural world.

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Author's Biography



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