

Call for Papers

Ambivalent Mythologies

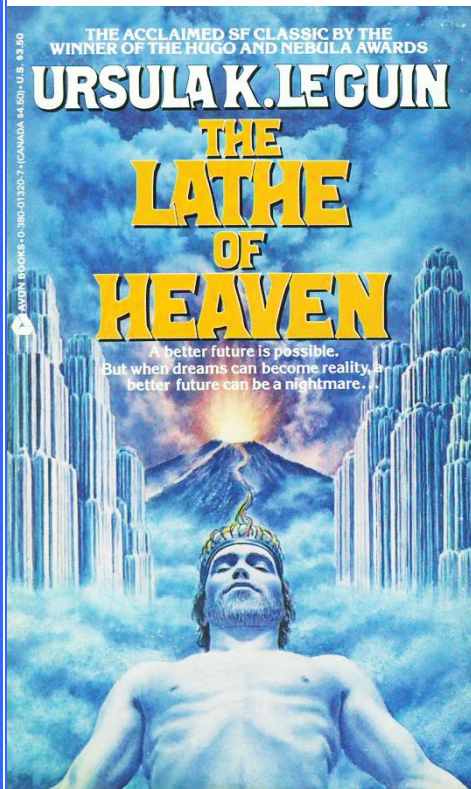
Ursula K. Le Guin as Creator and Unmaker of Religious Worlds

From her earliest stories such as “The Word of Unbinding” to late masterpieces such as “She Un-Names Them,” Ursula K. Le Guin (1928-2018) concerned herself ambivalently with the power of storytelling to construct, re-construct, and dissolve imaginative worlds.

Her subcreative prowess in the Earthsea cycle and the Hainish novels rivals that of Tolkien or Butler, with a difference: studiously avoiding systematization, she consistently reminded the reader of the fragmentary, perspectival, partial and contingent nature of the worlds she imagined. Through themes of exile and return (*The Dispossessed*, *Powers*), devices such as imagined ethnography (*The Left Hand of Darkness*, *Always Coming Home*), and a persistent interest in the realities of fiction and the facticity of reality (“The Rule of Names,” *City of Illusions*, “The Field of View,” *The Telling*, *Voices*), Le Guin established herself as North America’s greatest mythographer as also our greatest unmaker of comfortable myths, including her own.



We are putting together a proposal for a panel on Le Guin at the American Academy of Religion (November 20-23 2018, Denver Colorado), to be submitted to the **Religion and Science Fiction** unit (under the unit’s theme “Transposition of Religious and Theological Concepts through Worldbuilding”). We already have two papers (one on recursive remythologization in the Earthsea cycle, another on the ethics of Omelas). We would like two more. Themes might include:



- Western Daoism in *The Lathe of Heaven* (or in “the Silence of the Asonu”)
- Ethnographic fictions in the Hainish cycle (or in *Changing Plains*)
- Le Guin’s ambivalent utopias (*The Dispossessed* and beyond)
- Deep ecology in “Vaster than Empires and More Slow” (or in *The Word for World is Forest*, or *The Telling*)
- Le Guin’s eco-feminism, her anarchism, her rethinking of William James or Carl Jung or Alfred Kroeber...
- ...and so much more.

Deadlines are tight. If interested, send a 150 word abstract and 500-1,000 word proposal to michael.ostling@asu.edu and kingsar1@gvsu.edu by **February 20, 2018**. We will select the best proposals, combine them with our own, and submit them to the AAR by the March 1 Deadline.

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