I am very pleased, very proud and very startled to accept the National Book Award in Children's Literature for my novel THE FARthest SHORE.

Nothing could give me greater joy than to share this honor as it should be shared with the people whose work and patience and constant trust were essential to the writing and publication of the book. The people at Atheneum Press, especially my editor Jean Karl and illustrator Gail Garraty; and my literary agent Virginia Kidd; and - last of all and first of all - my husband and our children.

And I also rejoice in the privilege of sharing this honor with my fellow writers, not only in the field of children's books but in that even less respectable field of science fiction. For I am not only a fantasist but science fiction writer and odd though it may seem I am proud to be both.

We who hobnob with hobbits and tell tall tales about little green men are quite used to dismissal as mere entertainers, or sternly disapproved of as escapists. But I think that the categories are changing 'like the times. Sophisticated readers are accepting the fact that an improbable and unmanageable world is going to produce an improbable and hypothetical art. At this point realism is perhaps the least adequate means of understanding or portraying the incredible realities of our existence.

A scientist who creates a monster in his laboratory; a librarian in the Library of Babel; a wizard unable to cast a spell; a spaceship having trouble getting to Alpha Centauri; all these may be precise and profound metaphors of the human condition. The fantasist, whether he uses the ancient archetype of myth and legend or the younger ones of science and technology, may be talking as
(LE GUIN...1973 NBA Acceptance)

seriously as any sociologist - and a great deal more directly - about human
life as it is lived, and as it might be lived, and as it ought to be lived.

For, as a great scientist has said and as all children know, it is by the
imagination, above all, that we achieve perception, and compassion, and hope.