

THE CONCEPT OF UTILITARIANISM IN THE SHORT STORY “THE ONES WHO WALK AWAY FROM OMELAS” IN “THE WIND'S TWELVE QUARTERS” BY URSULA KROEBER LE GUIN

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji konsep utilitarianisme yang disajikan dalam cerita pendek “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” dalam “The Wind’s Twelve Quarter” karya Ursula K. Le Guin. Melalui pendekatan etis dalam literatur sosiologi, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implikasi etis dari tindakan kolektif dalam mencapai kebahagiaan umum di Omelas. Melalui analisis sosiologi sastra, penelitian ini mengungkap praktik sosial utilitarianisme yang dihadirkan dalam cerita. Hal ini menimbulkan pertanyaan etis yang mendalam tentang keadilan dan moralitas tindakan emosional. Penelitian ini juga menganalisis sikap individu yang memilih meninggalkan Omelas. Tindakan ini menunjukkan ketidaksetujuan terhadap prinsip utilitarianisme yang mengorbankan satu individu demi kebahagiaan yang luas. Sikap individu yang berani berjalan memunculkan nuansa etis tentang tanggung jawab kita terhadap masyarakat dan individu. Melalui analisis teori etika dalam pendekatan sosiologi sastra, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” mendorong untuk membatasi batas-batas etika utilitarianisme dan mengubah kompromi moral dalam mencapai perdamaian. Implikasi sosial dan psikologis dari cerita ini membangkitkan kesadaran kita akan dilema moral yang terkait dengan tindakan emosional dan menimbulkan pertanyaan etika yang mendalam tentang nilai-nilai kemanusiaan dan keadilan.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the concept of utilitarianism presented in the short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" in "The Wind's Twelve Quarter" by Ursula K. Le Guin. Through an ethical approach in sociology literature, this study aims to analyze the ethical implications of collective action in achieving general happiness in Omelas. Through analysis of the sociology of literature, this study reveals the social practices of utilitarianism presented in the story. This raises deep ethical questions about the justice and morality of emotional action. This study also analyzes the attitudes of individuals who choose to leave Omelas. This action shows disapproval of the principle of utilitarianism which sacrifices one individual for the sake of broad happiness. The attitude of individuals who dare to walk raises ethical overtones about our responsibilities to society and individuals. Through an analysis of ethical theory in a literary sociology approach, this study concludes that "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" pushes to limit the ethical boundaries of utilitarianism and change moral compromises in achieving peace. The social and psychological implications of this story awaken our awareness of the moral dilemmas associated with emotional action and raise deep ethical questions about human values and justice.

Keywords: Utilitarianism, Sociology of Literature, Ethics

INTRODUCTION

Utilitarianism is a normative ethical theory that dictates that kindness is the act that maximizes the happiness and well-being of all affected individuals. A variation of consequentialism, which believes that the only criteria for distinguishing right from wrong are the outcomes of an action, is utilitarianism. Utilitarianism holds all human interests to be equal, in contrast to other consequentialist ideologies like egoism and altruism (Mill, 2010)

The core premise of ethical utilitarianism is to maximize utility, also known as welfare. The creator of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham, defines utility as the character of any object that generates profit, gain, pleasure, good, or happiness or prevents injury, pain, evil, or misery to those whose interests are regarded (Bentham, 2003). Bentham continues on to say that every activity of any type increases happiness, and hence every act of government, not just private individuals, must promote happiness. For what is intended by the utility principle is the principle of approval or disapproval of any activity that must raise or diminish the happiness of the party whose interests are being considered: or any action to promote or oppose that pleasure.

The word utility is commonly used to refer to overall well-being or happiness. According to Mill, utility is the result of excellent conduct. In the context of utilitarianism, utility refers to persons who conduct things for the sake of societal utility. Utility denotes the well-being of many people. According to Mill's work, Utilitarianism, utility means that individuals seek happiness, and because everyone wants their own happiness, we all want everyone else's happiness and contribute to higher social utility (Mill, 2010). Thus, the optimum action is the one that creates the most pleasure for the utility of society, or, as Jeremy Bentham, the early inventor of Utilitarianism, phrased it, the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

"The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" is a short story included in Ursula K. Le Guin's book "The Wind's Twelve Quarter" that recounts a society that appears flawless and happy, but that contentment is founded on the pain of a kid who is

imprisoned and tormented (*The One Who Walk Away from Omelas* n.d.). This philosophy teaches, in the framework of utilitarianism, that ethical behaviors are those that provide the greatest enjoyment for the largest number of people. In "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," the residents of Omelas chose their collective happiness over the suffering of one individual. They persuade themselves that a pleasant life for many people is more essential than a child's suffering.

The short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" in Ursula K. Le Guin's book "The Wind's Twelve Quarters" provides a sophisticated and fascinating concept of utilitarianism and its ethical implications for collective action in the pursuit of general happiness. We can go deeper into the ethical dimensions of this story using the sociology of literature approach, as well as obtain a larger knowledge of the subjectively formed social co in this field of literary sociological literature, utilitarianism can be used to better understand how literary works influence and benefit specific communities or groups. Ethical theory is a method of examining moral and ethical issues in literary works (Setiawan, 2016). Ethical theory provides a framework for assessing and evaluating the characters' actions and decisions, as well as the moral consequences of collective behavior in the social context depicted in the novel (Culler, 2006). In terms of utilitarianism, ethical theory is used to assess whether actions or decisions in literary works are consistent with utilitarian principles that prioritize the greatest advantages for the largest number of people. A literary work can call into question or put to the test utilitarianism's ethical bounds.

Understanding the ethical implications highlighted in the narrative "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" requires a sociology of literature perspective. According to literary critic Jonathan Culler, sociology of literature is an approach that analyzes literary works as a mirror of societal social and political institutions (Rohman & Wicaksono, 2018). We can go deeper into the social ramifications of the utilitarian practice depicted in the novel and how it influences collective action in obtaining general happiness by evaluating it through the lens of sociology of literature.

The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive analytical method. The qualitative method entails examining descriptive data based on narrative text. The researcher will read and analyze the entire story, identifying parts pertinent to the notion of utilitarianism and investigating the accompanying ethical and societal ramifications. This method enables academics to grasp the complexities of concepts and comprehend how they relate to the story's social, political, and cultural values (Patton, 2014).

This technique is carried out by first describing the data in the form of the emergence of the concept of utilitarianism as provided in Ursula Kroeber Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," followed by analysis. Analytical descriptive writing begins with the description of facts, which is then followed by analysis (Ratna, 2008, p. 53). As a result, this strategy not only summarizes information, but also provides explanations.

The data gathered will be thoroughly examined. The data will be related to utilitarianism and other ethical theories, as well as the story's social setting. Furthermore, the analytical results will be discussed in order to describe the study's primary findings. The story's ethical and social consequences will be thoroughly examined. The researcher will wrap up the study by summarizing the main findings and presenting a larger understanding of utilitarianism in the context of this short story.

The purpose of this study is to examine the ethical implications of utilitarianism in "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" using an ethical method in sociology of literature. This study will take an ethical perspective to the moral issues that come from collective action to achieve general happiness at the expense of the individual. Using a sociology of literature method, this study will investigate the social repercussions of collective action on oppressed persons. It also intends to investigate the perspectives of those who choose to leave Omelas. This study will investigate the social and moral implications of individual activities that contradict the utilitarian principle in promoting collective happiness by incorporating the concept of utilitarianism.

Since it was important to conduct this research on the concept of utilitarianism with an ethical approach in the sociology of literature, the researcher first looked for earlier studies that looked at the same literary works but on different issues. Previous study on the analysis of utopian and dystopian societies in similar short stories was discovered. This study is a research work titled "*Masyarakat Utopis Dan Distopis Dalam Teks the Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas, Karya Ursula Le Guin*" that was prepared in Indonesian and published in the *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya University of Lancang Kuning Pekanbaru*, and accredited by *Sinta 5* (*Masyarakat Utopis Dan Distopis Dalam Teks the Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas, Karya Ursula Le Guin: Rosaliza & Syam, 2018*). Research Another previously discovered finding is research into the examination of symbolism in related literary works. The study is a scientific research essay named "*Analisis Simbolisme dalam the Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*" that can be found on the *Grades Fixer* website, an international educational essay publication site (*Analisis Simbolisme Dalam the Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas, Grades Fixer*).

Compared to the preceding studies, the research on the concept of utilitarianism in the short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" differs from the object of study in earlier research, yet both explore the same literary work. This research is superior to the previous studies since it was written in English, and the topic of utilitarianism, which is the subject of this research study, is rarely researched to assess literary works. As a result, this study will conclude with a response to how utilitarianism is portrayed in the story and how it promotes collective action in obtaining universal happiness.

DISCUSSION

Based on an explanation of the short story "The One Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula K Le Guin on the Ursula K Le Guin website (The One Who Walk Away from Omelas Bellot, n.d.) "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" is a short story written by Ursula K. Le Guin in 1973. The story takes place in the town of Omelas,

where the happiness and prosperity of all its people are dependent on the sacrifice of a child who is confined in awful conditions and suffering beneath a small room.

Le Guin describes Omelas as a beautiful and perfect city, full of happiness, art and joy. However, this happiness depends on the suffering experienced by the child. Every citizen of Omelas is aware of the child's whereabouts, and they are shown his horrifying state as part of the ancient ceremony. Le Guin introduces the reader to a complex moral dilemma in this story. The citizens of Omelas have to decide whether to defend their happiness by sacrificing one helpless life, or to release the child and sacrifice their prosperity and pleasure.

"The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" is strongly related with the utilitarian notion. Utilitarianism is an ethical viewpoint that contends the best path of action is the one that results in the most happiness for the greatest number of people. In this story, the inhabitants of Omelas enjoy enormous happiness, prosperity, and perfection as a result of one hapless individual's suffering (Wyman, 2012). This illustrates the utilitarian viewpoint, which judges an action based on the happiness outcomes.

In the moral dilemma of the story, the residents of Omelas who choose to remain rationalize the boy's suffering by seeing it as a little sacrifice required for the greater happiness of society. They embrace utilitarianism by sacrificing one life for the happiness and prosperity of many.

However, some Omelas residents prefer to leave because they believe that one person's pain is unacceptable even if it results in abundant enjoyment for another. In the context of this story, their acts reveal a more individualistic moral mentality or may reflect a critique of utilitarianism.

As a result, "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" delves at the moral and ethical quandaries that arise when utilitarianism is applied in extreme situations. This

narrative asks whether unforgivable individual suffering may be justified in the name of greater group happiness.

The analysis conducted in this study reveals some significant discoveries concerning the concept of utilitarianism in Ursula K. Le Guin's short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" with an ethical perspective in literary sociology. The following are some of the conversation outcomes:

1. Analysis of Ethical Implications

"The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" contains several complicated ethical concerns. One of its most important consequences is whether individual suffering can be justified in order to attain greater group enjoyment. In the story, the imprisoned child who suffers to extremes is a source of joy and wealth for the entire people of Omelas. The ethical implication is whether sacrificing one defenseless life for the enjoyment and happiness of many is justified.

The utilitarian approach to this story implies that the action that produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people is considered ethical (Burgess, 2019). For example, most Omelas inhabitants opt to stay and disregard the child's pain because they value their pleasure and happiness more than a life sacrificed. Ursula K. Le Guin summarizes the story's ethical implications as follows:

"And they all know it. It has been made clear to them... They all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships, the health of their children, the wisdom of their scholars, the skill of their makers, even the abundance of their harvest and the kindly weathers of their skies, depend wholly on this child's abominable misery."
(Le Guin, 2015, p. 93)

Another ethical implication is the contradiction between collective enjoyment and the pain of the sacrificing individual. The Omelas have decided to live a flawless life at the expense of one innocent person. The ethical

implications that arise concern the justice and morality of collective action in achieving the goal of general happiness.

"They all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships... depend wholly on this child's abominable misery" (Le Guin, 2015, p. 93)

The phrase above demonstrates the Omelas community's realization that their pleasure is dependent on the suffering of the individual. The complicated ethical implications stem from the question of whether collective action that sacrifices one individual for the greater benefit is morally permissible.

2. Analysis of Social Impact

An examination of the societal consequences of utilitarianism in the story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" is carried out in this study. In this story, utilitarianism results in overall happiness in Omelas, but at the expense of one man living in agony.

The societal impact according to (Grunberg, 2023) of a successful and ideal life in Omelas can be seen from two opposing views in the story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas." On the one hand, the people of Omelas have a lot of money, happiness, and beauty. The people lived in peace, with art, joy, and prosperity playing an important role in their lives.

However, this social impact is built on the suffering and oppression of a single, helpless individual. A child imprisoned in awful circumstances and subjected to unforgivable conditions is the secret to the joy and peace of mind experienced by the entire Omelas community. In other words, the social wealth and collective enjoyment enjoyed by the people of Omelas are dependent on individual exploitation and suffering, which has social consequences in the form of conflict and structural injustice. The following quotations are related to the rising social implications in this study:

"They all know that it has to be there. Some of them understand why, and some do not, but they all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their

city, the tenderness of their friendships, the health of their children, the wisdom of their scholars, the skill of their makers, even the abundance of their harvest and the kindly weathers of their skies, depend wholly on this child's abominable misery. (Le Guin, 2015, p. 93)

The phrase above exemplifies Omelas inhabitants' common understanding of the plight of confined youngsters. They recognize that the pain of the kid is the foundation or key to the happiness and well-being they enjoy as a community. This quote demonstrates, in the context of social impact analysis, that the positive social impacts in Omelas, such as the beauty of the city, intimate friendly relations, the health of children, the wisdom of scholars, the skills of makers, the abundance of crops, and good weather, are entirely dependent on the child's inhumane suffering.

In other words, this quotation demonstrates that the good social consequences enjoyed by the Omelas group are parasitic, based on the suffering and exploitation of underprivileged individuals. This sparks discussions on social ethics and justice in society, as well as whether social welfare based on individual suffering is morally justifiable. With this quote in mind, the social impact analysis of the story provides light on the moral struggle that develops when communal happiness and well-being are jeopardized by individuals' unforgivable pain.

Other social repercussions mentioned in the story are included in the following quotation:

"But to praise despair is to condemn delight, to embrace violence is to lose hold of everything else. We have walked out of the face of horror, say it is terrible and gone. Others have not. There are still some faces we have not seen, some lives not yet heard from..." (Le Guin, 2015, p. 92)

The quote implies to the social ramifications of an individual's decision to leave Omelas after learning of a child's unspeakable suffering. They recognize at first that suffering is a dreadful thing and that they can no longer be happy with this knowledge.

Their stance is represented as refusing to continue living in a society that relies on the misery of others. They recognized that by leaving, they were condemning the happiness and well-being that they had left behind in Omelas. In this context, applauding despair is equivalent to destroying joy, and accepting violence entails giving up everything else.

The social impact of their decision is the presence of people they have never met and lives they have never heard of. This demonstrates that there are other people in the Omelas community who may be subjected to persecution and misery. By leaving Omelas, people have created opportunities to explore and confront a broader reality, as well as to fight for more holistic justice and prosperity.

3. Analysis of Individual Attitudes

Individual attitudes in this story are tied to morality and human responsibility for the pain of others (Kabir, 2022). Some Omelas locals elected to remain and overlook the child's plight. They recognize that personal sacrifice is required to attain group satisfaction. This attitude represents utilitarianism's viewpoint, which values the happiness and welfare of many people over individual concerns.

“At mes one of the adolescent girls or boys who go to see the child does not go home to weep or rage, does not, in fact, go home at all. Some mes also a man or woman much older falls silent for a day or two, and then leaves home. These people go out into the street, and walk down the street alone. They keep walking, and walk straight out of the city of Omelas, through the beau ful gates. They keep walking across the farmlands of Omelas” (Le Guin, 2015, p. 93)

Those who chose to stay in Omelas despite knowing of the child's condition are described in the quote above. After witnessing the child, some small children or older adults may change their temperament. They stay, though, and conquer their own sentiments of suffering. They go about their everyday lives, interacting with

friends, living a lovely and flawless existence, and enjoying all of the happiness that the city has to offer.

The quote implies that there are people in Omelas who choose to ignore the child's misery and live their lives seemingly unfettered by ethics and morals. They understand that their happiness and well-being are dependent on the pain of others, and they choose to ignore their guilt or uneasiness in order to continue living the life they enjoy.

The attitude of individuals who choose to leave Omelas reflects a strong sense of morality and empathy for individual suffering that is sacrificed for collective happiness (Kabir, 2022). They refuse to embrace the utilitarian idea, which disregards the wellbeing of the individual for the sake of the common good. This study asks whether happiness based on individual suffering is morally appropriate in this scenario. The following quote reflects this:

"They leave Omelas, they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back. The place they go towards is a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness. I cannot describe it at all. It is possible that it does not exist. But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas." (Le Guin, 2015, p. 93)

The quote describes the mindset of the person who opted to leave Omelas. They fled the city of bliss and ideal existence into a darkness that few could fathom. According to the author, the location they are heading to is probably difficult for most people to imagine, and may even not exist. This suggests that they may not know what they would face after leaving Omelas. Those that choose to leave Omelas, on the other hand, are self-assured and informed of their objectives. This demonstrates that their decision was a deliberate choice based on moral beliefs, as well as a rejection of sacrificing personal integrity for the purpose of satisfaction acquired from the pain of others.

This part looks at moral freedom and individual attitudes in the face of dominant social standards. This demonstrates that some people would rather seek more difficult and obscure paths in order to keep their moral integrity than live in bliss based on the misery of others.

In this story, the individuals who walk away from Omelas represent a moral attitude that rejects the utilitarianism held by most of the population. They would rather value individual justice over moral concessions that may be required to achieve community enjoyment.

CONCLUSION

This research has led to the conclusion that Ursula K. Le Guin's short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," which is included in the book "The Wind's Twelve Quarter," presents a complicated idea of utilitarianism and poses serious ethical problems. The ethical approach in literary sociology allows us to examine the story's ethical implications, social influence, and individual views.

The ethical implication is the contradiction between collective enjoyment and the misery of the sacrificing person. The residents of Omelas decide to live a flawless existence at the expense of one individual. There are ethical concerns about the fairness and morality of such collective action.

The consequent social impact is structural injustice and social inequality, which are veiled behind Omelas' delight. Individual suffering underpins the perfect existence, posing concerns about the act's durability and morality.

The attitude of those who choose to leave Omelas raises moral concerns regarding our responsibilities to members of society. This particular action challenges the utilitarian principle and emphasizes the necessity of human values and justice in dealing with moral quandaries.

In conclusion, this research contributes to a better understanding of the complexities of utilitarianism in the context of the story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas." The ethical implications, social impact, and individual attitudes revealed in this story encourage critical reflection on ethical values, social responsibility, and the importance of considering individual well-being in collective action towards general happiness.

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