



THE EXISTENCE OF OMELAS CITIZEN
IN URSULA K. LE GUIN'S SHORT STORY ENTITLED
THE ONES WHO WALK AWAY FROM OMELAS

A THESIS

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Sarjana Degree Majoring Literature in English Department
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer honestly confirms that she compiles this thesis by herself and without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any university. The writer also ascertains that she does not quote any material from other publications or someone's paper except from the references mentioned.

Atika Ayuning Putri Ramadhani,

Semarang, March 14th 2018

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“Keep on running until my run is gone

Keep on riding until I see that dawn

And I will be found”

– John Mayer, *I Will Be Found (Lost at Sea)*

*This thesis is dedicated to my
beloved late father*

APPROVAL

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Semarang, March 14th 2018

Atika Ayuning Putri Ramadhani

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the existence of Omelas citizen in *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*. The method of close reading is used to reach the purpose of this thesis. To analyse the intrinsic elements, the writer uses setting, characters, point of view, conflict, and symbol. Meanwhile, for the extrinsic elements, the writer uses Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir's existentialism theory. The findings show that there are three types of Omelas citizen: the child, the ones who have not seen the child, and the ones who have seen the child. The ones who have seen the child is divided again into two groups – the ones that stay and the ones that leave. The former is considered to be living in bad faith, while the latter is considered to be free from it.

Keywords: *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*, Existentialism, Freedom, The Child, Omelas Citizen

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Literature is most commonly known as pieces of fictional writing that lack of truth – but is it? Works from Shakespeare, Webster, Marvell and Milton are, indeed, part of English Literature; but so do Frances Bacon’s essays, the sermons of John Donne, and whatever it is that Sir Thomas Brown wrote. The difference between ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ has been argued for a quiet long time. Even news reports are not entirely factual. Literature, according to Terry Eagleton, is not leaning heavily towards fiction or fact. It changes ordinary language into poetic words, make them more appealing than just statements (Eagleton, 1996:1-2).

The writer chose *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*, a short story by American author Ursula K. Le Guin, which was published in 1973 and won a Hugo Award one year after its first publication¹ as her research object. The story is plotless, written from a third point of view, and it revolves around the happy citizen of a utopian city named Omelas. Author of Herald Square, Jefferson Flanders, stated that there is something inhuman about the citizen; that Le Guin’s tale is dark and cannot happen in reality². In the story, a child must be sacrificed to let happiness into the city. The suffering of one child is essential to the state of bliss the citizen are in, thus creating a moral dilemma within the society: whether to save the child or let them suffer for the happiness of many.

¹ <http://www.thehugoawards.org/hugo-history/1974-hugo-awards/> (accessed on January 24th 2018)

² <http://www.jeffersonflanders.com/2006/07/ursula-k-le-guins-the-ones-who-walk-away-from-omelas/> (accessed on January 24th 2018)

Though, the story was heavily inspired by this particular quote from William James' ethical philosophy essay *The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life*, the writer would like to analyze the story from existentialism perspective. Existentialism itself is a cultural movement that emerged between 1940s–1950s in Europe with notable philosophers behind it such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Albert Camus³. It tackled some matters including freedom, oppression, and liberation. However, these philosophers did not create or use the term first – it was Gabriel Marcel that used the term to describe these philosophers. Sartre and Beauvoir accepted the term in 1945, while Merleau-Ponty did not accept it wholeheartedly (Reynolds, 2006:3).

The topics of freedom and oppression are highlighted in the story; the moral dilemma brewing within Omelas citizen has a tight link to both topics. That is why the writer would like to analyze the story from existentialism perspective. By conducting research on freedom and oppression, students will be able to understand what might be right for one self can be wrong to others. Thus, it can open their minds to see various perspectives, not just only one.

1.2. Research Questions

- a. How do Omelas citizens represent Modes of Being in the story?
- b. How is Bad Faith depicted in the story?
- c. What makes the ones who leave the city can be considered as free?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

- a. To analyze how Modes of Being get represented by Omelas citizens.

³ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/> (accessed on January 24th 2018)

- b. To analyze the depiction of Bad Faith in the story.
- c. To analyze the freedom of the ones who leave the city.

1.4. Methods of the Study

This thesis will use close reading method. The use of close reading is to retrieve information to support a thorough analysis of both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the story. From intrinsic aspects, setting will cover time, place, and environment. Point of View will discuss one specific POV, which is first point of view, to show what is going on behind the happy façade of Omelas citizen. Characters will explain the characterization of Omelas citizens. While conflict will cover both “a fight against society as a force” and “a fight that occurs between two opposites within one person” to show the moral dilemma of Omelas citizen. Then symbol will cover the role of the child in the society.

In the discussion of extrinsic aspect, existentialism theory will be used. The writer will refer to Sartre’s existentialism theory and Beauvoir’s existentialism ethics. The discussion will focus on Modes of Being (being-for-itself, being-in-itself, being-for-itself, being-for-others) and Bad Faith from Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*, along with Freedom and Liberation from Beauvoir’s *The Ethics of Ambiguity*.

1.5. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter includes background of why the writer chooses the research topic, scope of the study to give limitation for the research, the various purposes of the research, methods that will be used to support findings, and organization of the writing.

Chapter two contains a brief biography of the author and the synopsis of the story. Biography of the author is retrieved from internet source, while the synopsis of the story is arranged by the writer herself.

Chapter three discusses the theories used to support the findings such as intrinsic aspects and extrinsic aspects. The discussion for intrinsic aspects includes setting, point of view, characters, conflict, and symbol. The discussion for intrinsic aspects includes existentialism theory by Sartre and Beauvoir.

The fourth chapter is the main discussion of the thesis, which will be divided into intrinsic elements discussion and extrinsic elements discussion. Setting, point of view, characters, conflict, and symbol will be included in intrinsic elements discussion. Meanwhile, modes of being, bad faith, and freedom and liberation will be included in extrinsic elements discussions.

At last, Chapter five will briefly discuss the conclusion of the analysis conducted by the writer.

CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR AND SYNOPSIS OF THE STORY

2.1. Biography of the Author

A writer, a poet, and a translator—Ursula K. Le Guin (née Kroeber) was born in 1929 in Berkeley, California, and is the daughter of notable anthropologists, Alfred L. Kroeber and Theodora Kroeber. Le Guin had been familiar with the world of writing ever since she was five. She submitted her first short story to a science fiction periodical *Amazing Stories* at the age of twelve, but it was rejected. Her fascination towards science fiction had led her to write a good amount of utopian themed stories such as the *Earthsea* series, the *Hainish Cycle*, *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*, *Always Coming Home*, *The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia*, etc (Bernardo, 2006:1-3)

She married a historian, Charles A. Le Guin in Paris at the age of 30, and they have been living in Oregon ever since. Le Guin had achieved many awards in her lifetime; a National Book Award, five Hugo Awards, five Nebula Awards, SFWA's Grand Master, the Kafka Award, a Pushcart Prize, the Howard Vursell Award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the L.A. Times Robert Kirsch Award, the PEN/Malamud Award, the Margaret A. Edwards Award, and the National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. Some of her books also managed to be the finalists of Pulitzer Award⁴. *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* is included in the compilation of her

⁴ <http://www.ursulaklequin.com/BiographicalSketch.html> (accessed on January 24th 2018)

short stories, *The Wind's Twelve Quarters*. The short stories included in the book are her works from 1962 to 1974.

On January 22nd 2018, her family declared her death through social media Twitter. Before her death she was crowned as a “grand master” of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America. Her death was a huge loss in literature world. Guy Gavriel Kay told *The Guardian* that her work had influenced a whole generation and it was an honor to live in the same era with her⁵. She died at the age of 88.

2.2. Synopsis of *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*

The story is written through a first point of view in which the narrator describes a utopian city named Omelas and its citizens. Omelas, from what the narrator describes, seems to be a place where happiness pours out of every corner; music and laughter fill the streets during the Summer festival, bright and colorful buildings adorning the entire city, and the citizens' lack of guilty makes the narrator ponders. The city is too good to be true. The existence of a perfect place like Omelas can only happen in fairy tales – and the fact that the city does not have advanced technologies makes Omelas seems so out of place to exist in the modern days. Besides that, the long lasting happy mood the citizens have raise a question in the narrator's mind: what is the secret behind their happiness?

There are several types of citizens in Omelas: the child, the ones who have seen the child, and the ones who haven't seen the child. In this story, the happiness and the prosperity of the city depends solely on the child; it has been a

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jan/23/ursula-k-le-guin-sci-fi-fantasy-author-dies-at-88> (accessed on January 24th)

tradition to sacrifice one child for the happiness of many and the act of torturing the child is normalized in this society. The wretched figure is said to be living in a dark, damp room which sometimes get visited by the citizen.

The reactions toward the child are varied; from utter disgust to guilt. They know the child has to be there for them to be happy and most of them accept that because even if they free them, the child is too damaged beyond repair – so they treat them as if they are not human. The narrator does not know all of the rules in Omelas, but there are two rules the narrator says in the story: the ones who can see the child are citizens above the age of eight and to never speak nicely to the child.

The ones who haven't seen the child still feel unbothered by the long-standing tradition in the city. They are unaware by the injustice and thus the feeling of guilt is something they have not encountered. It is not an obligation to see the child, but the minority of Omelas citizen has come to see "it" to fulfill their curiosity. Once they have seen the condition of the child, these people feel guilt and remorse – feeling that they have never felt before.

Other than as a way to gain happiness, the child also functions as a shield from guilt; the narrator explains if it ever released from the room, guilt will come into the city. But ironically, guilt still comes to those who have seen the child. Regardless of the guilt, these people suppress the urge to revolt for they themselves understand that like the child, they are not free. Oppression does not only happen to the wretched child, but it also happens to some Omelas citizens themselves.

However, at the end of the story, the ones who have seen the child is divided again into two: the ones who stay and the ones who leave. The ones who leave are usually adolescents between 16-18 and middle age people that after witnessing the wretched child's condition or pondering about the child at home, they leave the city at night. The narrator tells the reader that the ones leave do not know where they are going, but they seem certain about finding the place outside Omelas.

CHAPTER III

LITERARY REVIEW

3.1. Intrinsic Aspects

3.1.1. Setting

In *An Introduction to Literary Studies*, Klarer states that setting “denotes the location, historical period, and social surroundings in which the action of a text develops” (Klarer, 2004:25). The importance of setting in literature is undeniably huge for it serves as a background that enriches the plot and supports the characters’ doings in stories. Location, historical period, and social surroundings can help a character to grow in a story (Meyer, 2011:116). For example, Motorcycle Boy would not have felt alienated if only he lived in a better environment in *Rumble Fish* (Hinton, 2013:65). However, setting is not only consisted of location, historical period, and social surroundings.

3.1.2. Point of View

Just like setting, point of view has a big role in telling a writer’s story. It tells a story through different ‘glasses’ – but do not confuse point of view with the author; they are two different entities (Meyer, 1990:128). This intrinsic aspect gives readers information, from environment to another character’s traits through their eyes. There are two types of narrators: narrator as a participant (writing in first point of view) and narrator as a nonparticipant (writing in third point of view). Both major and minor characters are included in first point of view, while third point of view has another four branches.

With point of view, the readers can see through the minds of the characters. The views from each different character may change the course of the story; for example, each chapter of George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series were written through different characters' views. Each character has very distinctive traits that makes each perspective important to the plot development. This way, the readers can read the stories from different perspectives, which enhances the readers' understanding of the book and its plot.

3.1.3. Characters

Just like setting, character is very crucial in story writing. The two elements correspond with each other; events shape characters for characters are influenced by events (Meyer, 2011: 64). Without character, a story will be dull and lifeless. The actions of a character can determine the end of a story – that is why character is essential in story writing. Characters are divided into several types: dynamic and static character, flat and round character, and stock character (Meyer, 2011: 68).

“A *dynamic* character undergoes some kind of change because of the action of the plot” (Meyer, 2011: 68). In stories, a dynamic character will not be the same as the character the readers know at the beginning of the story. The action of a plot or events will change a dynamic character, and thus the readers will not see the same character as the character they know in the beginning. A good example of a dynamic character is Rusty-James from S.E. Hinton's *Rumble Fish*. His character is described as a devil-may-care teenager who is very lively and loud at the beginning of the story. However, after the death of his brother, his

character changes into a more solemn one who does not want to get attached to anyone (Hinton, 2013:133-135).

A character that does not change at all in stories is called static character. The character will remain the same throughout the course of the story without events to influence it. For example, Atticus Finch from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The character does not change much through the story; he remains as a wise character even though his children change. A character that only has one or two traits in stories is called flat character, "A flat character embodies one or two qualities, ideas, or traits that can be readily described in a brief summary" (Meyer, 2011:68). This character is relatively simple and is not made to be complex.

3.1.4. Conflict

Holman writes, "Conflict is the raw material out of which plot is constructed" (Holman, 1985:98). As an important element of literature, conflict breathes life to fiction and alike. It usually occurs between two opposing forces, but sometimes it can occur within one character; Hamlet is a good example of a conflict that exists between one character and themselves. However, Holman divided conflict into four types:

1. A fight against the power of nature
2. A fight against another person
3. A fight against society as a force
4. A fight that occurs between two opposites within one person (Holman, 1985:98).

Holman also declares that, “The term conflict not only implies the struggle of a protagonist against someone or something, it also implies the existence of some motivation for the conflict or some goal to be achieved by it” (Holman, 1985: 98). Conflict spices up the story; makes it more interesting and may leave the reader on edge with what the characters have to go through to reach their goals.

3.1.5. Symbol

Symbol can be defined as “a person, object, or event that suggests more than its literal meaning” (Kennedy, 1976:173). Thus, by using the symbols, a writer does not need to give a long explanation about a person or an event. There are two types of symbols according to Kennedy. They are conventional symbol and literary symbol.

Conventional symbols are widely recognized in the society. For example, winter, the setting sun, and the color black represents death or an end, while rising sun, spring, and the color green represents youth and new beginnings (Kennedy, 1976:173-174). These symbols are so widely known that the readers might catch on quickly when they see them in stories.

While conventional symbols are more widely recognized, literary symbol is the more diverse one, “a literary symbol can include traditional, conventional, or public meanings, but it may also be established internally by the total context of in the work in which it appears” (Kennedy, 1976:174). Setting, character, action, object, name, or anything else can be a symbol but still maintain its literal meaning (Kennedy, 1976:174).

3.2. Extrinsic Aspects

3.2.1 Existentialism

Beauvoir explains Sartre's existentialism as a "philosophy of ambiguity" (Beauvoir, 1949:3) in which "man" can be both a subject and an object to others. For example, man can be a subject when he chooses what he wants to be while he is conscious; they have the freedom to choose the role they want to display or portray in the real world – they are the God for themselves. Man as an object is like when he was born. He could not choose where he wanted to be born in or his parents, which Sartre and Beauvoir usually call "facticity" or outside limitation. Beauvoir also states that, "However, man does not create the world. He succeeds in disclosing it only through the resistance which the world opposes to him. The will is defined only by raising obstacles, and by the contingency of facticity certain obstacles let themselves be conquered, and others do not" (Beauvoir, 2015:10). Freedom can only be gained when one realizes that even though there are things they cannot change – facticity – they still can change the future.

3.2.1.1 Modes of Being

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre erases dualism (the exterior and interior of a being) and believes that the appearances are not exterior nor interior. They are all equal and create existence (Sartre, 1978:xliv). He also divides modes of being into three types: being-in-itself, being-for-itself, and being-for-others.

Being-in-itself is within an object; it is also called the unconscious being. It is uncreated and it is not derived from anything (Sartre, 1978:lxviii). The object is not aware of its existence because being-in-itself is not allowed to come out to

the consciousness. If being-for-itself needs to create essence out of nothingness, being-in-itself already has a fixed essence. Sartre believes that some people have misunderstood the roles they take in life (being-for-itself) as their being-in-itself when the main characters of being-in-itself are they are uncreated and cannot create anything.

While being-in-itself lives within objects, being-for-itself lives outside them (the conscious being). Sartre defines being-for-itself “as being what it is not and not what it is” (Sartre, 1978:lxv). Being-for-itself is not concrete like being-in-itself, it is incomplete. The defining character of being-for-itself is nothingness, which means being-for-itself has to create themselves out of nothingness to exist (Sartre, 1978:74-78). Sartre gives an example of being-for-itself by comparing it to a waitress. A waitress is, of course, a human but when she is at her workplace, she identifies herself with a waitress’s characteristics: energetic, polite, and eager to serve. It is okay if this role is only played during her worktime, but when she forgets that she is a human being and believes that “a waitress” is what she really is or her being-in-itself, this phenomenon is called bad faith.

Being-for-other is when a human is in the mode of being-for-itself while another human looks (Sartre, 1978:222). Sartre divided being-for-other into three relations:

- a. The Other can be an object and used as an instrument
- b. The Other can have perspectives on objects someone is staring at and give them “internal haemorrhage”
- c. The Other can be anyone (a he or a she) that can look and judge

someone until that someone feel their own “objectness” (Reynolds, 2006:92).

The Other can be an object and used as an instrument

For this, Sartre gives an example of how people treat shopkeepers. Most of the time, a shopkeeper follows their customers to tend to their needs and requests. The objectness of a shopkeeper is shown when the customers only talk to them when they need something, thus a shopkeeper is identified as an object by the customers (Reynolds, 2006:92).

The Other can have perspectives on objects someone is staring at and give them “internal haemorrhage”

Let’s say someone is watching porn secretly in their room. It is the middle of the night; the perpetrator does not expect someone to wake up and catch them. However, a door from a room adjacent to theirs is suddenly opened and a series of footsteps can be heard – they are heading towards the perpetrator’s room. The perpetrator does not have time to turn off the porn they are watching, and hence they are getting caught in the act. That sensation when the perpetrator realizes that they are about to get caught is what Sartre meant with “internal haemorrhage”.

The Other can be anyone (a he or a she) that can look and judge someone until that someone feel their own “objectness”

For example, a woman yells at her children in a public place while people are looking. When she realizes she is being stared at, she will identify herself with how she might be perceived by others: temperamental or bad mother. The woman can know how the others might think of her by observing their expression. The experience of shame that the woman feels, according to Sartre, recognizes that the woman is an object that The Other is looking at, and that there is a foundation outside of the woman that she cannot control. Though, Sartre believes The Other is not necessarily needed to experience The Look (Reynolds, 2006:95-96).

Reynolds conclude that, “essentially, Sartre believes that relations with others are conflictual and this is primarily because we are always, for Sartre, trying to control the impact of the look ... we are dependent on a freedom that is other than ours, and in this minimal sense, Sartre suggests that we are ‘enslaved’” (Reynolds, 2006: 98). By ‘enslaved’, Sartre wants to highlight how human have a tendency to define freedom based on what others think of freedom, not theirs. The lack of authenticity or originality is what puts them in a state of Bad Faith.

3.2.1.2 Bad Faith

Bad faith, as what Sartre explains in his book, is “a lie to oneself, on condition that we distinguish the lie to oneself from lying in general” (Sartre, 1978:48). A man with bad faith creates another role to portray – a role that is chosen because of the force of society and he identifies himself with the false role, thus lying to himself. This fact that is expressed only exists in the transcendent, which means it lives in nothingness. While the original (the hidden attitude) exists in the truth.

Sartre gives an example of a woman being pursued by another man. When he says “you are attractive!” the woman knows what his gesture means, but she refuses the fact that she must choose whether she wants to date him or not in the future. She sees his gesture as a mere attraction or appreciation – until he starts to hold her hand. If she lets him hold her hand, it automatically means that she engages herself in the relationship. But if she refuses his gesture, it will break the harmony, so she decides to keep her hand in his just in case (Sartre, 1978:5). As what has been said, to live in bad faith is to live in lies; human should have realized their power to be anything they want without the force of anyone. They should have treated their nothingness as a blank canvas where they can paint anything on it, for they have the freedom to do so. To live in bad faith also means their so called “freedom” is limited to only what others define as being free while casting aside the possibility of defining freedom by themselves.

3.2.1.3 Freedom and Liberation

First of all, freedom can only exist by involving itself in the world (Beauvoir, 1949:33), which means a man’s freedom is measured by his actions.

Beauvoir gives an example of science,

Science condemns itself to failure when, yielding to the infatuation of the serious, it aspires to attain being, to contain it, and to possess it; but it finds its truth if it considers itself as a free engagement of thought in the given, aiming, at each discovery, not at fusion with the thing, but at the possibility of new discoveries; what the mind then projects is the concrete accomplishment of its freedom (Beauvoir, 1949: 34).

Science, according to Beauvoir, can lose its freedom if it surrenders itself to the serious. But if it realizes its truth as a free engagement of thought, the acts of discovering and its discoveries can be categorized as an accomplishment of its

freedom. Science has a wide range of fields, and hence the act of discovering and its discoveries cannot be limited.

Man already gained his right for freedom since birth. No one can take it from him but other man (de Beauvoir, 1949:35). He cannot go against things because only his own kind that has the power rob his freedom; this is what makes oppression exists.

Because of oppression, the world is divided into two clans: the oppressor, the one who enlightens mankind by pushing his perspectives on them, and the oppressed, the one who succumbed to the situation to merely support the majority (Beauvoir, 1949:35). The only way to gain freedom for the oppressed is by denying the oppressor or rebel against them. To prevent this, though, the oppressor will argue that what the oppressed gets is what they deserve. The oppressor desires oppression because “he is unaware of the possibility of rejection” (Beauvoir, 1949, p. 37) thus, the oppressed needs to revolt

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

4.1. Analysis of Intrinsic Elements

4.1.1 Setting

There are three types of setting identified in the story: setting of place, setting of time, and social setting – the first to be analyzed is setting of place. The story takes place in a utopic city named Omelas. The narrator describes Omelas as a very beautiful city where its citizens live harmoniously and happily in communion (Le Guin, 1977:472). Omelas is set near a mountain and the sea and has bright colored buildings adorning the city. The sounds of laughter and music filled every corner and from a glance, the city looks as if it is a city out of a fairytale; a place where happiness resides permanently. However, under the city of happiness, lives a child that exists as a sacrifice for the happiness of Omelas. Unlike Omelas citizens who live amongst bright-colored buildings, the sacrificial child lives either in a basement or in a cellar in one of the city’s buildings, “It has one locked door, and no window. A little light seeps in dustily between cracks in the boards, secondhand from cobwebbed window somewhere across the cellar ... the floor is dirt, a little damp to the touch, as cellar dirt usually is” (Le Guin, 1977:475). The description of the room shows how the child is poorly treated; the child lives in a dirty room, all alone, and with a little source of light from a cobwebbed window. Through the depiction of their living conditions, readers can see the injustice that is originally hidden from outsider’s eyes. It also shows who is the oppressor and

who is the oppressed – Omelas citizens all live above the ground where the sun shines brightly, while the child has to live in a small, dirty room located in the underground or cellar where it has a little source of light.

The second setting to be analyzed is the setting of time. The whole story happens during the day when they celebrate the annual summer festival throughout the city, “The crowds along the race course are like a field of grass and flowers in the wind. The Festival of Summer has begun” (Le Guin, 1977:474-475). Omelas during the day is described to be lively and the true embodiment of joy. But when the night comes, it is a different story. While the day is toned with happiness, the night is the opposite. Some of the ones who have seen the child cry themselves to sleep during the night after what they have seen in the cellar/basement and some others, the ones who leave the city, are explained to have their journey during the night (Le Guin, 1977:477). This setting of time shows two sides of Omelas society that cannot be seen during the day. The ones who leave the city shows bravery by leaving during the dark, while the ones who stay in the city shows their true feelings in the night.

The last but not least is social setting. The narrator briefly explains Omelas’s society at the beginning of the story,

But there was no king. They did not use swords, or keep slaves. They were not barbarians. I do not know the rules and laws of their society, but I suspect they were singularly view. As they did without monarchy and slavery, so they also got on without the stock exchange, the advertisement, the secret police, and the bomb (Le Guin, 1977:472).

The narrator depicts Omelas as a city where violence is forbid – no secret police and the bomb – but ironically, all the prosperity and happiness within the city depends solely on the torture of a child. Other than sacrificing a child for the happiness of many, Omelas also has another belief that there is only one definition of happiness: luxury. They condemn happiness that is built of violence and find luxury as a safe kind of happiness,

Happiness is based on a just discrimination of what is necessary, what is neither necessary or destructive, and what is destructive. In the middle category, however – that of the unnecessary but undestructive, that of comfort, luxury, exuberance, etc. – they could perfectly well have central heating, subway stations, washing machines, and all kinds of devices not yet invented here, floating light sources, fuelless power, a cure for the common cold (Le Guin, 1977:473).

This definition of happiness is widely accepted in the city. The Omelas citizens, though described as clever and complex humans, do not have their own definition of happiness. The lack of individuality or originality in Omelas eventually leads some of the ones who have seen the child to be oppressed by the society, for they force themselves to believe that only this kind of happiness is the true form of happiness (Le Guin, 1977:476). Oppression also exists in the city of happiness. Oppression in Omelas does not come from dictator leaders, but the society itself is already oppressive. The victim of oppression in *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* is the child, who is oppressed by being forced to live in a cellar/basement as a sacrificial for the city.

4.1.2 Point of View

Le Guin uses first point-of-view in *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*. The narrator in the story is both nameless and genderless, and knows the secret of Omelas citizens. Though, the narrator seems to know everything – from the dynamic of Omelas citizens to which way the ones who leave the city go – it seems like the narrator is an outsider. The following sentence is the evidence, “I do not know the rules and laws of their society, but I suspect that they were singularly view” (Le Guin, 1977:472).

This shows how the narrator is a mere observer, just like the readers, and through the narrator’s eyes, the readers can know both the good and the bad of Omelas. The way the narrator speaks in the story also shows how this story is open for interpretation. For example, the narrator asks the readers how the description of the city makes them feel: “Do you believe? Do you accept the festival, the city, the joy?” (Le Guin, 1977:475). This shows that the narrator is objective; the narrator lets the readers decide whether they want to condemn the actions of Omelas citizens or they want to sympathize with them.

The narrator also lets the readers decide what a city of happiness could have, “–they could perfectly well have central heating, subway trains, washing machines, and all kinds of marvelous devices not yet invented here ... or they could have none of that: it doesn’t matter. As you like it” (Le Guin, 1977:473). Combined with the revelation of the child, this kind of narration leads the readers to think whether living in a “perfect” place like Omelas is worth all the guilt the

citizens have to bear once they have seen the child. The narrator does not condemn nor the narrator sides with the child: the narrator shows the reader both the good and the bad aspects of the city, and let the readers themselves choose what they want to think about it.

4.1.3 Characters

In *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*, there are three characters: the child, the ones who have not seen the child, and the ones who have seen the child. Each character represents flat character, static character, and dynamic character. The character that represents flat character is the child. Throughout the story, the narrator describes the child as such, “It is feeble-minded. Perhaps it was born defective or perhaps it has become imbecile through fear, malnutrition, and neglect ... It has been afraid too long ever to be free of fear” (Le Guin, 1977:475). The child is characterized with only two traits: feeble-minded and lives in constant fear. It is a simple character and is not made to be complex; the only role the child has in the story is to be a sacrificial. No more, no less.

Static character is represented by the ones who have not seen the child. The reason why they are considered as static character is because they do not change throughout the story. Since the ones who have not seen the child do not know the condition of the child nor its living arrangement, they do not feel the same sentiment as the ones who have. This is shown in the following sentences, “They all know it is there, all the people of Omelas. Some of them have come see it, others are content merely to know it is there. They all know it has to be there”

(Le Guin, 1977:476). The people who have not seen the child are content in not knowing. They remain nonchalant regarding the child until the end of the story.

At last, the ones who have seen the child as a dynamic character. The ones who have seen the child are divided again into two groups: the ones who stay in Omelas and the ones who leave Omelas. Even so, both groups can be considered as dynamic character for they have gone through a life-changing event – seeing the child – which shatters their belief regarding happiness. For the ones who leave Omelas, these people do not find any more reason to live in a city that is built by injustice (Le Guin, 1977:477). The act of seeing the child has motivated them to search for a place where no child has to be sacrificed; to be brave and go on a journey alone without clear destinations. By leaving, these people show a change from what they are before they see the child, and thus making them a dynamic character.

Though, the other half of the ones who have seen the child do not leave the city they, too, have gone some changes after they see the child. For instance, they deem themselves as the same as the child: not free (Le Guin, 1977:477). The idea of living in luxury upon the torture of one child does not seem appealing to them once they come to see the child. Seeing the living condition of the child and the child's malnourished figure have both angered and saddened them. These people, just like the ones who leave, want to free the child. However, the consequences of freeing the child are far too great but unlike the ones who leave the city, these people feel like they cannot revolt and must follow the tradition. The second change for these people is the way they convince themselves to be happy. In the

beginning of the story, these people find happiness in luxury and communion, but the act of seeing the child has changed their view on happiness. Since they do not know any definition of happiness other than the one that has been taught to them, they try to convince themselves that they still can be happy even if they do not agree with the tradition. This is shown in the following sentences, “Yet it is their tears and anger, the trying of their generosity and the acceptance of their helplessness, which are perhaps the true source of the splendor of their lives” (Le Guin, 1977: 477). Through this, it can be concluded that these people try to convince themselves that their suffering is their new source of happiness. Even so, these people still take *drooz* to make them happy (Le Guin, 1977:473).

4.1.4 Conflict

In this story, there are two evident conflicts: conflict against society as force and conflict between two opposites within one person. As what has been said in the previous chapter, there are people who have not seen the child and there are people who have seen the child. The ones who have conflict against the society are the ones who have seen the child. Seeing that Omelas society normalizes the sacrificial and the torture of a child for the happiness of many, the feelings the ones who have seen the child possess can be considered as an anomaly. The narrator describes their feelings as the following sentences,

No matter how well the matter has been explained to them, these young spectators are always shocked and sickened at the sight. They feel disgust, which they thought themselves superior to. They feel anger, outrage, impotence, despite all the explanations (Le Guin, 1977:476).

Their feelings – the anger, the outrage, and whatnot – indicate their disagreement with what the society believes to be right. The ones who have seen the child question the rightness of Omelas's tradition: is it okay to let one child suffer for the happiness of many? Why does the child have to be sacrificed?

What these people know are the child has to be there and the happiness of Omelas depends solely on this child's misery (Le Guin, 1977:476). However, the rules are contrary to what these people want to do, which is to free the child. The contrast between the rules and these people's wish shows the conflict between the ones who have seen the child and Omelas's society.

The second conflict in the story is a conflict between two opposites within one individual. After meeting the child in that dingy room, the ones who have seen the child are torn between freeing the child and following the rules. At first, these people would cry and question the tradition in Omelas. Even so, some of these people would give justifications upon justifications as to why they should not free the child. This is shown in the following sentences,

But as time goes on they begin to realize that even if the child could be released, it would not get much good of its freedom: a little vague pleasure of warmth and food, no doubt, but little more. It is too degraded and imbecile to know any real joy (Le Guin, 1977:477).

There are two opposites within the ones who have seen the child: the one that does not accept injustice and the one that thinks the injustice is inevitable. Though in the end, some people decide to accept the injustice while some others leave the city as a means to show their disagreement with the society (Le Guin, 1977:477).

4.1.5 Symbol

Symbol in the story is represented by the tortured child. As the child's gender is said to be unknown, the narrator refers the child as 'it', which suggests how the people of Omelas view the child: an inanimate object. The reason why these people view the child as an inanimate object is because they only see the child as a way to gain happiness and as a shield from guilt. This shows how the child symbolizes the fear of Omelas citizens. Without the child, the citizens will be unhappy; without the child, the citizens will feel guilty – and these people do not want to let guilt into their city or let the city be unhappy.

For the ones who leave the city, the act of leaving shows their courage to overcome their fears and move on with their lives. Meanwhile, the ones who decided to stay in Omelas cannot overcome their fears and think of themselves as helpless (Le Guin, 1977:477). They lie to themselves by thinking they cannot change because human is capable of making a change, and the ones who stay refuse to see that.

4.2 Analysis of Extrinsic Elements

4.2.1 Omelas Citizens as Modes of Being

As what has been discussed in the Characters section, Omelas citizens are divided into three groups: the child, the ones who have seen the child, and the ones who have not seen the child. The characters in the story represent each Modes of Being; the child as being-in-itself, Omelas citizens as being-for-itself, and the ones who leave the city as being-for-others.

4.2.1.1 The Child and Being-in-itself

The child in *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* is described to be genderless – the narrator says it is hard to say whether the child is a boy or a girl, for it has been too wretched to know their gender – and referred as an ‘it’ throughout the story (Le Guin, 1977:475). The narrator further describes,

The child used to scream for help at night, and cry a good deal, but now it only makes a kind of whining, “eh-haa, eh-haa”, and it speaks less and less often. It is so thin there are no calves to its legs; its belly protrudes; it lives on a half-bowl of corn meal and grease a day. It is naked. Its buttocks and thighs are a mass of festered sores, as it sits in its own excrement continually (Le Guin, 1977:475).

From the description above, it can be concluded that this child is not seen as a human. The child does not speak; does not have the ability to choose their path; and is treated like it is not a human. It never does something on their own (being-for-itself) nor has it ever felt the scrutinizing of the Look (being-for-others). The narrator’s description of the child makes it look like the child is an inanimate object – like being-in-itself. Being-in-itself does not derive from anything and it cannot transcend into anything either, just like the child. The origin of the child is not explained by the narrator. However, the narrator suggests that the child is brought to the room through force,

The people at the door never say anything, but the child, who has not always lived in the tool room, and can remember sunlight and its mother’s voice, sometimes speaks, “I will be good,” it says. “Please let me out. I will be good!” They never answer (Le Guin, 1977:475).

Other than the facts that the child does not have a concrete origin and is treated like an inanimate object, the thing that proves that the child is being-in-itself in the story is their essence. Unlike being-for-itself that has the ability to create something out of nothingness, being-in-itself already has a fixed essence and in the story, the child functions as a way to get happiness for Omelas citizens and as a shield from guilt or unhappiness. Without the child, the city will not be as thriving and as prosperous as it is right now; the happiness will wither and guilt will come into the city. This shows how the child is treated as a tool to gain happiness and a shield to protect these people from unhappiness, which further proves its role as being-in-itself.

4.2.1.2 The Omelas Citizens and Being-for-itself

In Omelas, it is not an obligation to see the child. Everyone can choose whether they want to go the room to see it or not, and even so, there is still a rule that restricts people below eight-year-old to see the child (Le Guin, 1977:476). Being-for-itself in the story is represented by two groups: the ones who decided not to see the child and the ones who decided to stay in Omelas.

4.2.1.2.1 The Ones Who Have Not Seen the Child

The act of being-for-itself is depicted through the Omelas citizens who decided to not see the child. This is shown through this part of the story, “They all know it is there, all the people of Omelas. Some of them have come to see it, other are content merely to know it is there” (Le Guin, 1977:476). The fact that some people have seen it does not pique their interest because they do not feel the need

to see child; they are not affected by others who have seen it, therefore they choose to not see at all. It is also not an obligation to see the child; the people who have seen it come on their own, not because it is a rule they must obey. This is why the people who decided to not see the child do not know the injustice that is happening within their city. They cannot have the same sentiment of the ones who have seen it, for these people do not know the exact condition of the child to know whether it is an injustice to keep it or not.

4.2.1.2.2 The Ones Who Have Decided to Stay

For the ones who have seen the child, the narrator does not explain why they go to see the child; it is only stated that some of them go there to abuse the child while some others only look (Le Guin, 1977:475). As there is no obligation to go there, their action shows that it is their own decision to see the child. There is also no rule that states they should abuse the child, but they initiate the act themselves – this represents the being-for-itself in the story. These people choose to come to see the child even when it is not commanded; they choose to abuse the child when the rule is only to never speak nicely to the child. By seeing the child, these people realize their fears: to live in guilt and unhappiness.

While some of them eventually leave, there are some others that decided to stay. Their being-for-itself is also shown in their choice to stay – and unlike those who leave, these people choose to accept the injustice (Le Guin, 1977:477). These people give justifications upon justifications as to why they decided to stay and not free the child in the story, and one of them is the happiness of the entire

Omelas. They, somehow, feel responsible in keeping the happiness of Omelas, and thus they think they are not free like the child.

Being-for-itself in *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* is shown through a series of decisions that the Omelas citizens make in the story. Their decisions are not based on others – all of them are the decisions they made on their own, and thus they show the act of being-for-itself.

4.2.1.3 The Ones Who Leave Omelas and Being-for-others

As what has been said before, the people who have seen the child are divided again into two groups: the ones who stay and the ones who leave. While the ones who stay remain in the city as they try to keep following the tradition, the ones who leave move on with the thought of finding a better society. After seeing the child and realizing the injustice within Omelas society these people conclude that they no longer have the desire to be involved in that kind of society. They flee the city, all of them walking alone without a clear destination (Le Guin, 1977:477). Their being-for-others is shown through their assumption that there will be a better society than Omelas.

One of the relations of being-for-others is the Other as an object to be used as an instrument. In this case, the Other is another society and it is used as the force for some of the ones who have seen the child to leave the city. Though, these people do not have a clear destination, they believe there is another society that can give them a better place to stay. They treat this other society as an object, as an additional force that prompts them to leave, as an object that gives them

hope. Seeing the condition of the child makes them question a lot of things regarding Omelas's tradition. This other society gives them hope and makes them brave enough to do something they never thought before: leaving Omelas, as what has been described by the narrator, "The place they go toward 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, 1977:477).

Even without a clear destination, the Other – another society – renders them to find a better place to live in, a place where injustice like the one in Omelas does not happen.

4.2.3 The Depiction of Bad Faith

Bad faith in *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* is suggested in the second to last paragraph of the story, "Their tears at the bitter injustice dry when they begin to perceive the terrible justice of reality and to accept it" (Le Guin, 1977:477). The ones who experience bad faith are not the ones who have not seen the child, for they are not aware of the injustice, nor are they the ones who leave the city. Bad faith, in the story, is experienced by the ones who have seen the child, felt the guilt, but decided to stay and keep following the tradition. These people also compare themselves to the child and believe that like the child, they are not free (Le Guin, 1977:477). By believing in the notion that they are helpless, these people associate their helplessness as their being-in-itself, which cannot happen for they are humans with the ability to create something, unlike being-in-itself.

The ones who have seen then child know what the city does to the child is an act of injustice. They feel enraged at first and shed some tears for the faith of the child. But soon they begin to accept the injustice, let themselves believe that their happiness comes from their acceptance of their helplessness (Le Guin, 1977:477).

To be born and raised in such environment is a facticity. However, the ones that decided to stay do not realize humans do have free will and there will always be another choice to be chosen in life. Where they were born or what kind of society they live in cannot change the fact that they have more than one choice in life; that they have the ability to become anything, if they realize their being-for-itself. However, the ones who decided to stay let themselves believe that they are helpless and lie to themselves by accepting their helplessness. This is why they live in bad faith; they do not realize their freedom and force themselves to believe that they are just as helpless as the child.

Another thing that suggests bad faith in the story is the fact that these people still practice the city's long-standing tradition even when they think of it as bad (Le Guin, 1977:476-477). The tradition to sacrifice one child has been taught to them since they were children and as children, they have not realized their subjectivity, hence they follow what their parents say. Although as children they cannot do much, these people should have realized their freedom by the time they get to be adults – but they do not. The act of accepting the injustice that happens in Omelas shows how these people remain as children who do not realize their subjectivity.

In order to free themselves from the shackles of bad faith, these people must realize their freedom and the freedom of others. As humans, these people should realize that every human being has the rights and freedom to choose what they want to be. Just because others do not change, that does not mean they have to remain the same. However, some of the ones who have seen the child cannot see any other way to revolt without hurting anyone when in reality, there is another way.

4.2.4 The Freedom of the Ones Who Leave Omelas

As what has been said in the previous sub-chapters, not everyone in Omelas has seen the child, though they all know the existence of the child. The people who have not come to the tool room feel content with not knowing the child's condition, whilst some others feel curious enough to see the child themselves when they have reached a certain age (Le Guin, 1977:476). The reason why the story of the wretched child has to be explained at a certain age – between eight and twelve-years olds – is not explicitly explained by the narrator. However, it is suggested that some people do not understand why the child has to be there, thus only when the children have reached at least eight-years old then they are allowed to come see the child (Le Guin, 1977:476).

To see the backbone of their prosperity is a crucial moment for these people's lives and it draws a same reaction from these people: disgust. The people who have come and see the child cry for days for they have let the guilt to infiltrate their minds. But even so, the action this small group of people take afterwards is divided into two actions. The first one is to accept the injustice and

eventually engage in the activity of abusing the child, while the second one is to leave the city for good. From a glance, it is easy to say the people who decided to leave Omelas are free men for they have freed themselves from the shackles of injustice – but are they? There are several reasons as to why the ones who walk away can be deemed as free men: the time of their departure, walking alone, and uncertain destinations.

4.2.4.1 The Time of Departure

In the story, the narrator tells readers that some people who have come to the tool room do not weep or rage or even go to their homes at all (Le Guin, 1977:476). They either go west or north and never look back. These young people walk day and night *and* without clear destinations. What suggests the freedom they finally gain in the end of the story is that they leave in a haste without proper planning and they do not feel the need to hide themselves while escaping Omelas. The people who leave immediately after witnessing the tragic faith of the child are adolescents. Young people, in this story, symbolizes the better future. These younglings may have been taught the wrong thing since they were born, but their reluctance to accept the injustice within Omelas further suggests that some traditions may have to be let go for the betterment of society – and the conductors of this is the young people. To leave on impulse shows how they do not act on anybody's order or suggestion. They do it because they want to and they finally realize that they have a choice in life: succumb to the system or go against it.

Though the adolescents are the highlight at the end of the story, some adults – after going silent for a day or two – eventually leave the limbo they have

been living for years and act based on their own desire (Le Guin, 1977:477). Leaving Omelas means that even though they have been living with the tradition for years, it is still possible for adults to be part of the change. The adults who decided to leave Omelas might not realize their power of choosing their path when they first came face to face with the child, but once they realize the choices they have, it is never too late to change lanes. These people, both the adolescents and the adults, leave the city confidently. There is no attempt to hide themselves even though they, especially the adults, used to fear The Look. It shows in how they walk through the village streets, between the houses at night when the owners of the houses still awake (Le Guin, 1977:477). This particular scene symbolizes the bravery they have finally gained after living in bad faith. They feel confident with the choice they have made, and it is shown in that particular scene.

4.2.4.2 Walking Alone

Another thing that suggests their freedom is the fact that they walk alone. Just like the previous suggestion, walking alone means that the decision is solely made by them and no one has interfered. To see adolescents making a decision on their own shows that they are no longer embraced by their parents and by 'embraced' it means these young people have stopped thinking the way their parents think. Ever since they were children, their parents have been feeding them their way of thinking. What is right and what is wrong – for example, the rule of the city – are dictated by their parents, and thus they have this pre-conceived belief that having the wretched child sacrificed is normal and needed. However, when they finally have the chance to see the real condition of the child with their own eyes, it

shatters their belief in the system. By walking alone and hastily after their meeting symbolizes their shift from children to responsible adults. These adolescents do not go home first – they leave the city immediately so they do not have the chance to meet their parents before they go.

Walking alone, for adults, shows how these people's view on happiness has changed. As what has been stated in the story, the citizen of Omelas find happiness in communion (Le Guin, 1977:472), and thus the lack of individuality in the city. These people have been rotating their lives around the community, believing that the happiness of the community is more important than theirs, and to see they choose a lone journey rather than to stay with the people they have known all their lives shows the determination they have to free themselves. Change is not an easy feat. To bravely walk out of their home, alone, with uncertain future ahead is already an act of being-for-itself.

4.2.4.3 Uncertain Destinations

The last thing that shows their freedom is the narrator's description of the lack of certain destination for the ones who walk away. The narrator tells readers that the decision to leave the city, for the adolescents, is made hastily without proper thinking. These young people have not had the time to set their destination before they go for they were not expecting to feel a surge of emotions after meeting the child. What is important for them at that time is only to leave Omelas. Whether there is a place better than Omelas or not these adolescents keep going even through the night. Meanwhile for the adults, they have been living for far longer than the adolescents and thus they have witnessed the injustice for a longer period

too. What snaps them out of their bad faith is their feeling of guilty. The feeling of guilty stems from their inability to save the child, and is eventually repressed to lessen the heartache. However, this leads to unhappiness. The unhappiness can be seen through the narrator's description of their archaic smile and their use on drugs to keep them happy (Le Guin, 1977:472-473). So, when these people have finally reached their limit, they leave without looking back. They do not care whether there is a place better than Omelas but they are very keen on leaving the city behind and starting anew.

The darkness they go through after they walk through the streets of a village symbolizes the uncertainty they are actually facing after leaving. All their life they always know something certain like how the child needs to be there and what happiness is in Omelas. But this time, they are going in blind. The route they take is also different from one person to another – some go west, some go north. They do not know whether they would be happy or miserable out there and whether their journey is worth it or not. The only thing they know is they need to leave and so they leave. To go on a lone journey without a certain place as a destination shows their determination to get freedom. They cast aside their fears, leave their past behind, and revolt to get their freedom. However, with their freedom achieved, they also need to abandon their wish to free the child.

From existentialism perspective, the ones who walk away from Omelas can be considered as free men for they have revolted against the system by leaving the city. These people may not free the child or vocally protest the injustice in the city, but they show their disagreement in a way they could. The

ones who walk away from Omelas refuse to live upon the suffering of other, hence their change of heart. A happiness built upon the suffering of other does not charm them anymore, though they themselves have not found their own meaning of happiness. Through their journey they are certain they will find something along the way, and this act alone shows how they do not associate helplessness as their being-in-itself anymore – especially for the adults who have been living in bad faith for years.

For the adolescents, their lone journey means how they are finally freed from the shackles of pre-conceived belief that one child must suffer for others to live happily. Before they meet the child, they never questioned their parents regarding their source of happiness and followed the Omelas society way of life. Their meeting with the child is a crucial moment that creates a new way of thinking: that the tradition they have been taught all their lives is surprisingly not okay. These adolescents cannot and will not live upon the suffering of other – and so they gain their freedom by choosing to leave the city behind.

The ones who walk away from Omelas's refusal to follow the tradition of the society may not have solved the problem, but the message it delivers is still clear as day: they do not want to be a part of the injustice the Omelas citizens are conducting. Their action may look like a cowardice move but from existentialism perspective, their leaving shows how they have stopped living according to others' expectation. It is a freedom to choose where they want to go – to the west or to the north – and it is also a freedom to be alone on the journey. Uncertainties of the outcome do not faze them for their bravery for leaving the city of happiness

is already a fuel for them to keep believing that the uncertainty of their journey is better than being confined in a city that thrives upon the suffering of other.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Sartre explains the modes of being and bad faith in *Being and Nothingness*. There are three modes of being according to Sartre: being-in-itself, being-for-itself, and being-for others. In *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* by Ursula K. Le Guin, the characters represent modes of being – the child as being-in-itself, all of Omelas citizens as being-for-itself, and the ones who leave as being-for-others.

The child's role as being-in-itself is shown through the narrator's depiction of the child: cannot speak, does not change, and it is referred as 'it' in the story, which indicates its lack of human characteristics within the child. All of Omelas citizens can be considered as being-for-itself for they make their decisions on their own: some decided to not see the child, some decided to see the child, while some others decided to leave the city after they see the child. While being-for-others is shown through the relationship between the ones who have not seen the child (the Other) and the ones who decided to stay (the object). Though, the story is more famous with the oppression of the child, the ones who have seen the child decided to stay, hence they experience bad faith. They realize that they are the object for the Other to judge and scrutinize. The city's rules and traditions, though relatively view, are very strict and oppressive. The ones who stay lie to themselves by thinking that they are helpless and do not have a choice but to succumb to the tradition, and thus leading them to do something against their wishes.

The ones who eventually leave the city can be considered as free men from existentialism perspective. For the adolescents, they start making decision on their

own by leaving the city abruptly. While for the adults, they finally free themselves from the shackles of oppression after living unhappily for years. The adults stop living in bad faith once they realize that they do have a choice regarding this matter, though it is not the choice that they originally wanted to choose: to free the child. The ones who leave the city revolt in a way they can. Hence, they can be considered as free men at the end of the story.

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